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Poet Lore Plays

THE ROSENHAGENS

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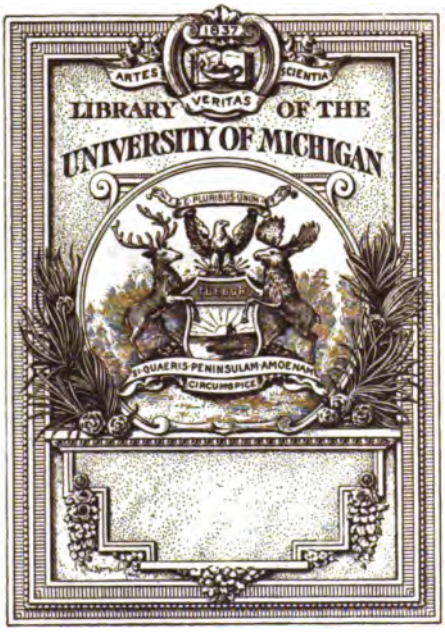
Richard G. Badger, Publisher, Boston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THE ROSENHAGENS*

(A Drama in Three Acts)

By Max Halbe

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CHARACTERS OF THE DRAMA

Christian Rosenhagen, estate owner at Hohenau.
Karl Egon, his son.
Madam Rosenhagen, his mother.
Martha Reimann.
Hermine Diesterkamp.
Fritz Diesterkamp, senior in the gymnasium, brother of Hermine.
Thomas Voss, land owner at Hohenau.
Pastor Siebert.
Dr. Nowack, physician.
Wegner, agent.
Rathke, overseer on Rosenhagen's estate.
Minnie, servant.
Bumkewitsch, farm hand.
Three other farm hands.

Scene of drama: Hohenau estate.

Time: the early nineties. The first act takes place in June, the last two on a day in September, the former in the forenoon, the latter towards evening.

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FIRST ACT

Large hall in the manor house. Two doors at the right and a door at the left lead to the various rooms. In the middle of the rear wall, there are two glass doors, through which one passes down into the flower garden over large stone steps. The two windows to the right and left of the glass doors also face the garden. High oak cases, brown with age, crowned with Delft vases are ranged along the side walls. A table with papers, newspapers and writing materials stands in the center of the hall and is surrounded by chairs. A faded sofa against the front part of the left wall,—the room is plain and austere, but the white curtains and the view upon the garden render it not uninviting. It is a clear spring day in the middle of June. The two folding doors of the rear wall are opened wide. One looks over flower beds and patches of turf which are bordered farther back by a brook. A narrow foot-bridge connects the garden with an adjacent meadow lying beyond, past which the eye wanders into the distance up to the hazy, blue remote chain of hills.

Pastor (*in suppressed tones*).—So the doctor has been called?

Martha (*likewise*).—Why, of course, Mr. Siebert. The carriage has been gone this good half hour!

Pastor.—If he has only found him at home!

Martha.—You can't imagine, Mr. Siebert, how terribly we were frightened, when uncle suddenly groped so strangely, fell upon a chair, was white as chalk and unable to utter a word, and just panted. *(Shuddering.)* I'll not forget that in all of my life!

Rathke (*approaching*).—Yes, we were just standing together, I and Mr. Rosenhagen and Miss Reimann, and were talking about something, and of course got to talking again of that fellow on the other side of the mill race. (*He points in the direction beyond the brook.*) You know, don't you, who is meant by that? I don't have to take much time to explain that to you. (*He points again.*)

Pastor (*sighing and shaking his head*).—God knows! This unfortunate quarrel has poisoned my whole pastorate here.

Rathke.—Never mind, Mr. Siebert, that is more than ordinary quarreling, the affair of the two, our master and the fellow over yonder, Voss. That is war to the death, I say to you, in which each one grapples for the throat of the other; and now they clutch each other, and it's up with one of them.

Pastor (*retreats a step*).—God help me. Are these men Christians?

Rathke (*after a moment*).—Have you ever experienced war, Mr. Siebert, real war? Do you know what it means when a company of militia is expected to storm a French village?

Pastor (*somewhat impatient*).—In one's reading, one forms a conception of that. But what is the purpose of all this?

Rathke.—You will see that directly, Mr. Siebert. You know, I went through that a dozen times. Then the command is: March, march! and all men storm headlong! And now pinch up your eyes and throw the enemy back and take one place after another and after it is all over——

Pastor (*impatiently*).—Well? After it is all over?

Rathke (*chuckles*).—Yes, after it is all over . . . . I am not telling you all that for nothing, Mr. Siebert. Now imagine, after it is all over, at the very end of the village there is one place left; in it the enemy has planted himself, from it they shoot, and as merrily as ever. Say for yourself, Mr. Siebert, would you leave that house to the enemy, even if it were built a little stronger than the rest of them, and were a little harder to take? Would you just let the enemy keep on shooting from that house?

Pastor.—For the life of me, I don't understand——!

Rathke (*condescendingly*).—You see, Mr. Siebert, the enemy, with whom we have been concerned, our master and I, has been represented by the other land owners that have been here in the village, I don't know how long. All of these, with the help of God and old Nick, we slowly froze out and put out, the one this way, the other that way, as best suited the case, but they all had to go! (*He pauses for a moment and strokes his beard.*) All! But one! You know well enough, but *that one* on the other side of the mill race.

Pastor (*excited*).—And Thomas Voss is now doomed also? The rope has been knotted for his gallows also?

Rathke (*quietly*).—Just so, Mr. Siebert. Just as you say.

Pastor (*turns around on his heel*).—Shame on you, sir. Do be ashamed of yourself! (*He takes a few steps angrily.*)

Rathke.—Mr. Siebert, whosoever says A, must also say B, and whosoever has taken a whole village by storm cannot leave the last place to the enemy. It is then a matter of so—or so—, and if you can swallow the rat, you will also be able to swallow its tail.

Martha (impatiently to RATHKE*).*—What stuff you are talking, Rathke. Mr. Siebert must get a fine opinion of you. And of uncle also.

Rathke.—Never mind, Miss. That is all settled beforehand. It's all a matter of *have to.*

Martha (*impetuously*).—Believe me, Mr. Siebert, I do not wish to

defend my uncle at all. I am not pleased with all that he does myself. But what is a poor girl to do, who is alone in the world, has no parents and nothing at all? One depends upon his relatives, of course. It's bad enough.

Pastor (*steps to table where she is*).—Dear Miss Reimann, no one under the sun is reproaching you.

Martha.—Of course, I don't know anything about it, Mr. Siebert, but I do know this much, old man Voss isn't an angel either. I imagine the one is as much to blame as the other.

Pastor.—No, no, Miss Reimann, the blame rests entirely with your uncle. Why, I have had to witness that for years, and have been unable to hinder it. The demon of greed has hunted your uncle through life. That is the source of all the conflicts which he has had with his fellow men, the innumerable law suits which have aroused so much vexation. Greed for land, Miss Reimann, insatiable greed for land, that is the serious reproach which I must level at your uncle.

Martha.—Then indeed it must be something of a family trait, Mr. Siebert. I am also pleased when I see all of the beautiful land that my uncle has acquired in his life, the meadows and fields and all the rest. I am pleased about that, even if I shall never have any benefit from it, and I myself am poor as a church mouse.

Pastor (*smiling*).—With you it is an entirely different matter, you see, dear Miss Reimann. That is an innocent pleasure, nothing more.

Martha (*strangely*).—Do not say that, Mr. Siebert. I can easily imagine how that can take hold of a person. That must come like ravenous hunger——like ravenous hunger. He who has always sat at the the table of strangers and has always eaten the bread of strangers, can easily imagine that.

Pastor (*has become serious, looks at her penetratingly*).—Then I advise you, Miss Reimann, curb the demon in your breast! Curb it.

Martha (*lightly*).—O dear me, Mr. Pastor, it will probably not be so very serious. I'll not even get into the embarrassing position at all.

Pastor (*zealously*).—Tell me yourself, Miss Reimann, and you, Mr. Rathke, what has Christian Rosenhagen had of all this?

Rathke (*in a matter of fact way*).—He has become a rich man, Mr. Siebert.

Pastor (*somewhat nervous*).—Good, yes! But what has he staked for it?

Rathke.—I do say, Mr. Siebert, the only thing that comes free of charge is death. And even that is not true, one pays his life for it.

Pastor (*has taken several steps*).—Didn't you yourself say a while ago, that the paralytic stroke or whatever it may be, the misfortune, that it happened in the midst of a conversation about your neighbor?

Rathke.—That may be, all right enough, Mr. Siebert.

Pastor (*quizzically*).—And the conversation, to judge by the disposition of Mr. Rosenhagen, was not calm.

Rathke.—Nope, it wasn't calm. Not a bit calm. We were just speaking of the meadow land that you see there on the other side of the mill race (*he points beyond the brook*), where the foot bridge leads across. As you know, the whole piece belongs to him over there, it is his best meadow land, without it he cannot subsist, and if he is deprived of that, then he can go and pack up. We were just speaking of that, and Mr. Rosenhagen became terribly excited.

Pastor.—Terribly excited! Just so.

Martha.—Yes, because uncle said that the meadow land didn't belong to Voss at all, that it rightfully belongs to the village.

Pastor.—And since the village now belongs to your uncle, then the meadow also—— Oh! (*He turns away.*)

Martha (*shrugging her shoulders*).—Why, I am only telling what uncle says. It doesn't concern me, of course. What is the meadow land to me?

Rathke (*disapprovingly*).—Do not say that, Miss Reimann; we could make very good use of the meadow, and now it is only in our way and only occasions us loss. The master is quite right there.

Pastor.—So that idea is really spooking about in the heads of these people?

Rathke.—So it is, Mr. Siebert. And the idea is not half bad. For this much is certain, the meadow land was seized by the Vosses in the days of Olim under Napoleon, when the whole village had died out. It was formerly a village common, and when afterwards the French were gone again, and no one any longer paid attention to it, the Vosses simply kept it as their own. That is sure as shooting, as certain as twice two are four, only Mr. Rosenhagen cannot prove it yet, black on white, but it probably will come out all right.

Pastor (*interrupting*).—And so you were talking about that?

Rathke.—Yes, and Mr. Rosenhagen struck the table and pointed over to the meadow and cried out: "Right forever is right, the meadow belongs to the village and I'll kill off that fellow over there!"—— And at that moment—— (*He pauses and is silent.*)

Pastor.—At that moment a Higher One raised his hand and cut short the days of Mr. Rosenhagen before his time.

Rathke.—Well, he's not quite that far along, Mr. Siebert; you know Mr. Rosenhagen is still alive.

Pastor (*animated*).—Yes, thank God. It is not too late even now. But is it not food for thought that Christian Rosenhagen had to fall at the time when he wanted to bring about the fall of another? Isn't that food for thought?

Rathke.—Well, Mr. Siebert, one may explain that as he pleases.

Pastor.—You and Mr. Rosenhagen, my dear Mr. Rathke, have sown hatred and have reaped revenge! It is my task now to exterminate the weeds and to establish peace! You know, Miss Reimann, for years I have avoided entering the house of your uncle.

Martha.—And I was always very sorry about that, Mr. Siebert.

Pastor.—Today I came here in response to the first call—— Yes, I should have come even without your call, for I am pursuing a definite plan.

Martha.—So? Why, what is that, Mr. Siebert? May I take the liberty of asking?

Pastor.—I am pursuing the plan of reconciling your uncle with Thomas Voss.

Rathke.—I tell you that will be a stiff piece of work, Mr. Siebert.

Pastor.—I am counting upon the help of the Highest. Is the son with his sick father?

Martha.—Yes, Karl is with him, and grandmother.

Pastor.—Then, with God's help, take me in.

Martha (*points forward to the right*).—I beg pardon, Mr. Siebert, will you come through the blue room here?

(*The front door at the right is opened.*)

Karl Egon (*appears in the door*).—How do you do, Mr. Siebert? (*Extends his hand to him.*)

Pastor (*shaking his hand*).—God's own greetings, my dear Mr. Rosenhagen. God's own greetings!

Karl Egon (*seriously*).—I thank you for coming, Mr. Siebert. Father already has a great desire to see you.

Pastor.—I am glad with all my heart.

Karl Egon.—Much is running through his mind. You will scarcely recognize him.

Pastor (*in joyous excitement*).—Come, my dear friend. (*He draws him out through the half-opened door at the right.*)

Karl Egon (*following him*).—Through the blue room here, Mr. Siebert. Father is in his room. (*They go out.*)

Rathke (*approaching again*).—Such a wiseacre, such a wiseacre!

Martha.—Why, how did the poor pastor harm you, Rathke?

Rathke.—I cannot bear this everlasting establishing of peace.

Martha (*has stepped to the rear, looks through the doors into the distance beyond the garden*).—How blue the Liebschau heights look today. Just see, very dark blue, the woods over there!

Rathke.—Sign of rain. I've been feeling it for some time in my bones. This fine haying weather will probably come to an end soon. We'll hurry up and try to get some more in, or else it will all rot on a fellow's hands again.

Martha (*inhaling*).—The pinks are also more fragrant than usual. There is a sultriness in the air.

Rathke.—Yes, a thunder storm or rain, something or other is coming.

Martha (*looks out into the garden*).—The lilacs, too, have already finished blooming.

Rathke.—Why, of course, we are fast approaching St. John's day. What would you expeet, Miss! Why, the rye is almost beginning to head.

Martha.—Another spring past! Another! (*Sighs, takes a few steps, then after a short pause, somewhat suppressed.*) What is your opinion, Rathke? (*She points to the right.*) Do you think uncle will get on his feet once more?

Rathke.—I should say, Miss, I don't think much of this peace business. His sending for the pastor; that's a bad sign. A darned bad sign. It will soon be up with him.

Martha (*suppressed*).—And then?

Rathke.—Well, then the young man of course will get the estate.

Martha (*mysteriously*).—And then what?

Rathke.—And what would you suppose then? Then probably the young man will some day think of marrying.

Martha (*as before*).—Yes, I think so too.

Rathke (*slyly*).—Then we'll get a young woman into the household again.

Martha.—Yes, yes, a young woman!

Rathke (*continuing*).—And she will look like you, Miss, and have the same name.

Martha.—Like me? Goodness! What you do imagine!

Rathke.—Aha, one has his own notions of such matters.

Martha (*becomes attention*).—And I tell you, that will never happen in the world. Never!—— Never!—— (*Short silence.*) Do you still recall Hermine Diesterkamp, Rathke?

Rathke.—From Danzig?—— Well, do I! I always lifted her on her horse when she was here during vacation. But soon she did not need me at all any more. She could ride like old Nick himself.

Martha (*bitterly*).—Probably that is a strain of her mother's blood. She is said to have been something like a circus rider.

Rathke.—Yes, indeed, it caused a great hubbub at that time in Danzig, when rich Diesterkamp got himself one of these von Salamonskies from the circus. An infernal hubbub. (*He chuckles.*)

Martha.—She had come from Russia, hadn't she?

Rathke.—Yes, somewhere around there. She was a darned pretty creature. I often saw her. Mrs. Rosenhagen and Mrs. Diesterkamp came and went often. Mr. Rosenhagen didn't care a fig for what the people had to say. As I look back at those times, there was quite a gay life in this house, until the two Diesterkamps died, one soon after the other, first she and then he. Well, and then Mrs. Rosenhagen, she soon followed as you know. And then it became quiet in this house.

Martha (*reflecting*).—Yes, a short time after that uncle took me into his house to look after the household and such matters.

Rathke.—How the time passes! They also have been lying under the earth eight or ten years at least.

Martha (*starting up from her meditation*).—A moment ago you spoke of the young woman who will come into the household. If you want to know how she will look, then think of Hermine Diesterkamp whom you lifted upon her horse.

Rathke (*with lips apart*).—It ain't possible! I say, you are joking!

Martha (*bitterly*).—Do I look as if I felt like joking?

Rathke (*blurting out*).—But what will become of you then, Miss? You surely can't stay here then?

Martha (*smiling*).—Do you think so?

Rathke.—No, of course that won't do? You and the young woman. And the old woman is also here yet. No—nope!

Martha.—Well, I will just go somewhere else then. The world is large, isn't it?

Rathke.—But you haven't a single person in all the world?

Martha.—A person in my position will manage to get on some how. I am accustomed to it, am I not?

Karl Egon (*opens the front door at the right, enters, and looks about*).—And isn't the doctor here yet?!

Rathke.—I'll go and look on the pike. May be the carriage can be heard now!

Karl Egon.—Anything doing on the place? Anything to report?

Rathke.—Everything in order, sir. The laborers are raking up the hay, tomorrow we can haul it in.

Karl Egon.—Have you sent the mowers in the clover fields?

Rathke.—Yes, some to the field near the dam and some to the Liebschau Cut.

Karl Egon.—Good. And what of the beet girls?

Rathke.—Oh, the wenches. Why, they are as lazy as drones. They beat the Lord himself out of his time. Regular Polish lubbers!

Karl Egon (*laughing, to* MARTHA).—He has it in for the girls. Especially the Polish ones. You have probably had bad experiences, Rathke, how?

Rathke.—The devil take all of the darned women! (*He goes in through the door at the right, but turns around once more.*) I had forgotten; Wegner was here a while ago and inquired about old Mr. Rosenhagen.

Karl Egon (*absent minded*).—Wegner? What Wegner?

Rathke.—Well, the one from Danzig. The one who formerly had the property here, that Mr. Rosenhagen bought of him eighteen or twenty years ago, or so. You know him, don't you?

Karl Egon.—Slightly! Yes! The agent or whatever he may be. What in the world does he want?

Rathke.—He has something very important, he says.

Karl Egon.—Then understand that you are to send him in when he comes back.

Rathke (*listening*).—Now I hear something rolling on the pike.

Karl Egon.—It is to be hoped that it is the doctor.

Rathke (*going out*).—I'll go quickly and open the gate. (*Goes out through the rear at the right.*)

(MARTHA *has stood in the background during the preceding conversation and has looked dreamily into the garden.*)

Karl Egon (*steps up to her, lays his hand on her shoulder*).—So quiet, sister Martha?

Martha (*slightly startled*).—It is you?

Karl Egon.—Yes, who else should it be?

Martha (*smiling*).—Who else!

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Martha (*slightly startled*).—It is you?

Karl Egon.—Yes, who else should it be?

Martha (*smiling*).—Who else!

Karl Egon.—Somebody is dreaming?

Martha (*preoccupied*).—Somebody is dreaming!

Karl Egon.—Of happiness and love and great deeds, how?

Martha.—Yes, of that which is never to be.

Karl Egon (*lively*).—What's that!

Martha.—Possibly for *you!*

Karl Egon.—I should hope so. Great Scott!

Martha.—But not for me!

Karl Egon (*absent minded*).—Well, just wait till the proper man comes.

Martha (*strangely*).—The proper man will not come, that is all.

Karl Egon (*pensively*).—I tell you, Martha, I am in a strange frame of mind. I see father is ill. I must be prepared for anything.

Martha.—Do you really think so?

Karl Egon.—I myself do not know. It is possible, after all, that all will turn out well again. But he has never been so very strong. And then he has had much to stew and worry about. Now he is fretting about that. Do you know, he reminds me of one sitting before his ledger and balancing accounts. Well, and on such occasions many an item turns up that is not quite O. K., and he is sweating over that at present.

Martha.—I suppose that is the reason why he called for the pastor?

Karl Egon.—Certainly—— Certainly! I believe that it is a relief for him to unburden his mind freely for once. To me he cannot do that, as you know. We have always remained strangers to each other after all.

Martha.—You two *are* so different.

Karl Egon.—Yes, and with all, I have cared much for him. In my inmost soul. That is the strange thing about my condition. I cannot grasp the thought, that some time he will be no more. And at the same time——at the same time! (*He breaks off as if frightened at himself.*)

Martha.—Do tell me, Karl. Come sit down with me.

Karl Egon.—No, just let me walk to and fro. I feel as if a fever infested me. I must walk.

Martha (*resigned*).—As you please.

(*Short pause.*)

Karl Egon (*walking to and fro*).—See here, Martha, I am twenty-five years old now and yet, until at present, I have had neither goal nor any purpose in the world whatsoever.

Martha.—Why, Karl!

Karl Egon.—Of course, I have done what they all do. I have finished my school period, have prepared for agriculture, theoretically and practically, have finished my semesters at the university; that is all well and good. I have also looked around out in the world and have been able to weigh values. That was even the best of it all. I am indebted for all that to my father. He allowed me an absolutely free hand in all that. I have been able to do whatsoever I have desired to do. But what do you yourself say: Can that fill out one's life in the long run? Is one to allow all that one has thus learned and hoarded up to lie fallow for half of one's life?

Martha.—But you do not need to do that at all. You certainly have enough to do!

Karl Egon.—No, that is just the thing that I haven't. I am always only the second man. I must subordinate myself to father, and that I cannot do, nor will I. My ideas are too different from his to do that. I have seen far too much of the world to do that. And so I prefer to do nothing at all, and simply put my hands into my pockets. But when I think of it, that all that may continue God knows how long, that this state of affairs is to remain——. Terrible! Terrible! Do you comprehend that?

Martha.—Yes, I understand that well. I know what it means when a person has just no hope at all!

Karl Egon.—Yes, and for that reason the fever is now getting into my blood, as I think of the future. (*Has turned on his heel.*) When I say to myself, possibly you will become master sooner than you have expected, after all! . . . . So! Now you know how I feel!

Martha.—Possibly I know still more.

Karl Egon (*surprised*).—Still more?

Martha (*softly*).—I know of whom you are always thinking, when you are dreaming of your future.

Karl Egon (*smiling*).—Well, of whom do you suppose, you little clairvoyant?

Martha (*calmly*).—Have you tidings from her? Of course, you are corresponding with each other?

Karl Egon.—Just see, how clever and wise you are.

Martha.—What else, pray, can I do?

Karl Egon (*serious again*).—Yes, we have been courting since a year ago, when we saw each other for the last time in Switzerland.

Martha.—Where in the world is she now? Still abroad in the world?

Karl Egon.—Yes, now here, now there. Her last letter I received from Munich.

Martha (*after a moment*).—Doesn't she ever have a longing for the old home?

Karl Egon (*with animation*).—Home! Home! That is just it. She has found her home out there. I cannot even blame her for that. You know well enough how the people around here cast stones at her parents.

Martha.—But if she really likes you, she must surely yearn for you. Why doesn't she at least pay a visit some time?

Karl Egon.—Well, that *will* come about. At the very latest, next fall.

Martha (*mechanically*).—Aha. Next fall.

Karl Egon (*steps up before her*).—Do you know, Martha, I am going to confide something else to you.

Martha (*anxiously*).—Well, what is it? Do not frighten a person!

Karl Egon.—Yes, you will be surprised. I was going to say, that I have been intending to go away.

Martha (*frightened*).—Go away?—— For good?

Karl Egon.—As one looks at it. Possibly for good. At any rate I wanted to go out into the world.

Martha.—To her?—— To Hermine?

Karl Egon.—Together with her, yes!

Martha.—And what would your father have said to that?

Karl Egon (*excited*).—Goodness, don't you hear? I was not able to stand this condition here any longer. This inactivity! This mere having to look on! I have longed to be out in life, as the fish longs to be in fresh water.

Martha (*oppressed*).—And now?

Karl Egon.—Yes, now of course, the affair looks different. Now I shall hardly be able to get away.

Martha (*almost craftily*).—And probably you will bring Hermine here then? Do you suppose that she will stand it here, spoiled as she is, that she will really remain here?

Karl Egon.—That really goes without saying.

(*Short pause.*)

Martha.—Do me a favor, Karl, will you?

Karl Egon.—Well, what is it?

Martha.—Show me her picture. Of course you have it with you?

Karl Egon (*smiling*).—How do you know?

Martha.—You have it with you. Don't fib to me.

Karl Egon.—You two have been acquainted since the old days.

Martha.—Yes, but how long that has been. At least five years.

Karl Egon.—Yes, when she went to boarding school at Geneva. She was sixteen then.

Martha.—Show me her picture. I beg you!

Karl Egon.—You stubborn creature! (*He takes a photograph out of his pocket.*)

Martha.—I should like to know whether her eyes still have that same expression.

Karl Egon (*gives her the picture*).—If you absolutely wish to see it—— Now say for youself, isn't she beautiful?

(MARTHA *looks at it in silence.*)

Karl Egon.—Isn't that marvelously beautiful?—— As if it were taken from some fairy tale?

Martha.—Yes, yes, why, certainly.

Karl Egon.—Well, now then?

Martha.—She has really grown very pretty! And yet——!

Karl Egon.—Oh, the womanish jealousy!

Martha.—I don't know, the expression in her eyes——

Karl Egon.—Why, what fault can you find with those eyes? They are indeed the most beautiful part of her face!

Martha.—There is something about them——

Karl Egon.—Oh, come, you are petty.

Martha.—There is something dangerous about them!

Karl Egon.—Who is afraid? Danger attracts me!

Martha.—Karl! Karl! Be on your guard against those eyes!

Karl Egon (*out of humor*).—Give it back to me! —— In that matter, after all, all women are alike!

Martha.—They are something like nixie's eyes,—they are said to indicate misfortune. (*She gives him the picture.*)

Karl Egon.—Fortune or misfortune, we all do what we are compelled to do. (*He looks at the picture.*) Dearest, dearest one!

(*The rear door at the right is opened.*)

(MADAM ROSENHAGEN *hobbles through the door leaning on her cane.*)

Martha (*quickly*).—Put the picture away, Karl! Grandma is coming.

Karl Egon.—Why, how so? Do I need to be ashamed of this picture?

Martha (*embarrassed*).—I only thought!

Karl Egon (*while he slowly puts the picture back into his pocket*).—Did you see Dr. Nowack, grandmother? Is he here?

Madam Rosenhagen (*approaching*).—Why shouldn't I *see* him, when he was standing before me big as life? Do you suppose I am blind? Now don't get any foolish notions! I can still look through an oak plank.

Karl Egon.—Then indeed I will at once ——

Madam Rosenhagen.—Yes, I lost no time in getting out! I get sick at the stomach when I see a doctor!

Pastor (*steps in through the door at the right which is still half open. He is in a hurry and is beaming with happiness*).—I am hastening, my dearest Mrs. Rosenhagen. I am hastening. One must strike blocks of iron and human hearts when they are warm.

Karl Egon.—Why, where are you going in such a hurry, Mr. Siebert?

Pastor (*already in the center of the hall*).—Over to Thomas Voss! In a few minutes, God being willing, I hope to bring him over here. Every moment is precious now!

Karl Egon (*with animation*).—So you have succeeded?

Pastor.—Yes, he consents. The hard shell has melted! Before it is evening, the two old enemies shall have become reconciled.

Karl Egon.—And do you believe that Voss will come along without further difficulty?

Pastor.—Why, certainly! Quite certainly! Don't you suppose that I know my men?

Karl Egon.—Well, I shall be glad of that. As you know, in this case, I am also in favor of peace! To be sure, in favor of honorable peace!

Madam Rosenhagen (*has sat down on a chair at the table*).— I always *have* said, you are a bit off color! As far as I can think back, the Rosenhagens have been in favor of war, never in favor of peace! You are the first one that goes at it the other way.

Pastor (*already on the top tread of the steps, turns around once more*).—Good-bye, my dear people, till my immediate return.

Karl Egon (*calls after him*).—Straight through the garden, Mr. Siebert! Over the foot-bridge and then to the right.

(PASTOR *still beckons to him from the garden, then disappears over the foot-bridge to the right.*)

Karl Egon (*approaches again from the rear, smiling*).—Am I really so much off color, grandmother?

Madam Rosenhagen.—Yes, you are. You are of the new fangled kind on whom one never can count definitely.

Karl Egon (*smiles again*).—Don't say that, grandmother! *Do not* say that! I can go through thick and thin, if it ever becomes necessary.

Martha.—Yes, I also believe *that!*

Madam Rosenhagen.—What does *your* opinion amount to?

Karl Egon.—Moreover, you yourself encouraged father to become reconciled with Voss.

Madam Rosenhagen.—But I am an old woman and have all of these matters behind me long ago! I tell you, you ought to have seen me fifty years ago.

Karl Egon (*smiling*).—Dear me! fifty years ago!

Madam Rosenhagen.—Yes, then you were all still in the stork's pond. Isn't that so, Martha?

Martha (*smiling, preoccupied*).—Why, of course; *I* don't know, grandma!

Madam Rosenhagen.—She don't know! She don't know! You are right, Miss. In the windup the worms will eat us any how?

Karl Egon.—But I must look and see how matters stand over there and what the doctor says. (*He hastens out through the front door at the right.*)

Madam Rosenhagen (*to* MARTHA, *who still sits there dreaming*).—Well, what is the matter with *you,* Rosalind? You are making a face as if all of your yarn had floated away. I suppose you have some fellow on your brain?

Martha (*startled*).—How you *do* talk, grandma!

Madam Rosenhagen.—I know well enough whom! You might as well stop dissembling! (*She beckons to the right significantly.*)

Martha (*blushing, gets up*).—Nonsense, grandma! Nonsense! (*She hurries to the rear door at the right.*)

Madam Rosenhagen (*calls after her*).—Then see that you keep at it! Or the other one, Hermine, may come and get ahead of you!

Martha (*already in the door, she thrusts her head in once more*).—Nonsense! Nonsense! Nonsense! Nonsense! (*Off quickly.*)

(*At the right in front* KARL EGON *re-enters with* DR. NOWACK.)

Karl Egon.—So quite frankly, doctor, immediate danger is not at hand?

Dr. Nowack.—N——, not exactly immediate danger! But you know one isn't on the inside of such a thing, especially when the trouble is as

deep seated as in this case! That is the old belief of the layman. A physician is expected to be omniscient. Babble! When all is said and done, we also can only conjecture.

Madam Rosenhagen (*brings her cane down with a thud*).—That, for once, is still a true statement. You deserve a cross of honor for that. In other respects lying, after all, is your daily bread!

Dr. Nowack.—Now you be nice and quiet, grandma! I'll get you under my thumb, too, some day, after all.

Madam Rosenhagen.—God protect me! I have never needed a doctor and have become ninety-three years old.

Dr. Nowack (*sarcastically*).—Possibly just for that reason!

Madam Rosenhagen (*laughing*).—Do you see, you are not at all as stupid as you look! Do you know what you once prophesied to me?

Dr. Nowack.—N——, don't remember.

Madam Rosenhagen.—I should yet survive my whole family, that is what you prophesied to me.

Dr. Nowack (*again sarcastically*).—Well, then! My dear, what more do you wish?

Karl Egon.—Could that really have so much of a charm for you, grandma?

Madam Rosenhagen.—You doubt it? I am going to wait until the Day of Judgment, and when the trumpets blow I'll take a special post-chaise with four horses and drive to the devil's grandmother!—— And if the doctor wishes to, he may keep me company.

Dr. Nowack.—Thanks for the kind invitation. We should get on quite well together. Do you remember the time, grandmother, when we spoke of the worlds up there, of Jupiter and Mars and all the rest?

Madam Rosenhagen.—Yes, and that there are human beings in a sense like ourselves, only doubly as clever, and that they can fly. I should like well enough to take a hand at that some time. That would be a change, you know!

Dr. Nowack.—Well, then we can fly together over there for a while.

Karl Egon (*who has listened somewhat impatiently*).—I was going to say, Doctor, let me revert once more to your directions in regard to father.

Dr. Nowack.—I have written out all that is necessary. The prescription is in the patient's room. Whether or not it will do any good, is another question.

Karl Egon.—It is to be hoped!

Dr. Nowack.—N——, I can't say that I have much hope. What are you going to do with a clock that is completely worn out?

Karl Egon.—Why, father isn't so old yet.

Dr. Nowack.—Clocks vary, that is all. And then much depends upon how one has put them to it. You repair what can still be repaired, but you don't risk giving a guarantee.

Karl Egon (*suppressed*).—Are matters really that bad?

Dr. Nowack.—Yes! Why should I deceive you? You see—— (*He points to the grandmother.*) That is a different kind of a clock. That is built for eternity.

Madam Rosenhagen.—Hm, I always say, that the large number of deaths nowadays is simply due to the large number of doctors.

Martha (*opens the rear door at the right and enters the door*).—Will you kindly come over into the dining room now, Doctor? I have prepared a hasty luncheon for you.

Dr. Nowack.—Yes, I will report for my customary feed.

Martha.—The Elector's good wine is ready for you, Doctor!

Karl Egon.—And a cigar to smoke on the way!

Dr. Nowack.—Will be accepted thankfully.

Karl Egon.—Wait a moment. I'll go along. Martha does not know the brands yet.

Dr. Nowack.—God be with you, grandmother! We shall often see each other still in this life. (*He waves his hand to her, then departs with* KARL EGON *and* MARTHA *through the rear door at the right.*)

Madam Rosenhagen (*calls after him*).—You need not come on my account. Just remain at home nicely. (*She remains sitting in meditation, then looks around, because she hears steps from behind in the garden. Here in the meantime* PASTOR SIEBERT *and* THOMAS VOSS *have crossed the foot-bridge into the garden and are coming up the steps to the hall.*)

Pastor.—I wonder how long it has been, my dear Mr. Voss, since you have planted your foot upon this spot?

Voss (*who seems to follow the pastor only with hesitation, gloomily*).—Surely I can't recollect that, Mr. Siebert.

Pastor.—Yes, the ways of the Lord are strange. Would you so much as have dreamed last night, that you would ever enter here again at my side?

Voss.—I don't like to do it either, Mr. Siebert. If it weren't for your sake ——

Pastor.—Happy is the man who triumphs over himself!

Voss.—Why can't he come to me if he wants to make up? Why

must I come to him? Because I have remained only a little fellow and he has become a big gun? Is that why?

Pastor.—I am telling you, am I not, it is because he is ill, seriously ill! Because I fear that his days are numbered.

Voss.—Is that it? So he's really going to kick the bucket? Then I got ahead of him at least in this thing! I'll stand it for a long while in this old hide of mine! (*During the last sentences they have remained standing on the top step, at the entrance to the hall; now they proceed.*)

Pastor (*already in the center of the hall*).—Here I am bringing you an acquaintance, Mrs. Rosenhagen!

Madam Rosenhagen (*has risen slowly*).—Did you come after all then, Voss?

Voss (*stands opposite her and strokes his clean-shaven face*).—It's the pastor's doing! Without the pastor you probably wouldn't have laid eyes on me here!

Madam Rosenhagen.—It has been some little time since the last occasion when we two talked to each other!

Voss.—Yes, *some* little time!

Madam Rosenhagen.—But you have changed little.

Voss.—A body is getting older.

Madam Rosenhagen.—Such a kid as you are! I can still see you as a boy. I can see you as plainly as I do today! Once you almost choked my boy off for me!

Voss.—May be it would have been better if I'd done it!

Madam Rosenhagen.—I dare say you are still the same old slugger that you were in the days of yore?

Voss.—Who can vouch for himself?

Pastor (*who is observing the two in joyous excitement*).—And now, my dear friends, will you two not shake hands?

Voss.—I don't suppose that's necessary, Mr. Siebert!

Pastor.—And if I beg you to with all my heart?

Madam Rosenhagen.—So far as concerns me he can offer me his hand or not! I know I have nothing against him.

Voss.—I have a better recollection of it.

Madam Rosenhagen.—Of what concern is it to me what squabbles you have had with my husband and my son?

Voss.—You helped along pretty well in those days, thirty or forty years ago. It's not to your credit that I am still in the village, that I have not become a roustabout like Wegner, or have gone to America, like Stubenrauch, or hanged myself like Pohlmann when the little bit of money

was gone which he got from your son for the fine farm! It is certainly not to your credit.

Madam Rosenhagen.—Since those days a good bit of water has run through the mill race. I hardly think of that as in a dream!

Voss.—After all, it will do no good for us to talk about it. The life that one has had from this will not be changed or improved by that!

Madam Rosenhagen (*murmuring partly to herself*).—Scarcely in my dreams do I think of that.

Voss.—How is it, Mr. Siebert? Shall we go now or not? If it must be done, then I prefer that it should be done soon!

Pastor (*pulls him away*).—Come along, man! Come! (*The two go out through the front door at the right.*)

Madam Rosenhagen (*shakes her head, murmurs*).—This is a peculiar world! An awfully peculiar world! (*She slowly hobbles away to the left.*)

(*At the same time* KARL EGON *enters the hall with* WEGNER, *through the rear door at the right.*)

Karl Egon.—Rathke tells me that you were here once before.

Wegner.—Yes, I inquired for your father.

Karl Egon.—Father is ill; you will have to put up with me.

Wegner (*looks around curiously and inquisitively*).—Well, well—— ill! Surely not seriously?

Karl Egon.—I fear he is!

Wegner.—Hm——I am sorry!

Karl Egon.—Well, what can I do for you?

Wegner (*again as before*).—Excuse me, kind sir, I am only looking around a bit. You know, formerly I was here many a time.

Karl Egon.—I know—— You formerly lived here at Hohenau.

Wegner.—Yes, when I still had my property, the same that your father afterwards bought from me. Your father made a fine slice out of that.

Karl Egon.—You did not have to agree to it, did you?

Wegner.—I had to, well enough!

Karl Egon.—How so, did you have to?

Wegner.—What are you going to do when the water rises to your throat? Your father knew quite well that I could not keep up any longer, that I had to sell, whether I wanted to or not, or the creditors would have come and locked up the shebang before my very nose—— Well, and so we made our little deal. It was a *good* deal for your father.

Karl Egon (*shrugging his shoulders*).—May be! How does that concern me?

Wegner.—Why, I haven't the slightest notion of reproaching your father for it. Business is business. And even if it is one's own father, every one must see how he fares. I had to pay a large apprentice's fee before I learned that. As a result, however, *he* is established more firmly than ever.

Karl Egon.—You are living at Danzig now?

Wegner.—Yes, you know I am a kind of intermediary in all matters that yield a profit; houses, mortgages, real estate, old furniture. They are very fond of buying that in the city now. (*He looks around inquisitively again.*) You see, these oak wardrobes, you would get a fine bit of money for them if you cared to. I tell you I know a dunce who would buy them right off.

Karl Egon.—The wardrobes will not be sold. They are heirlooms.

Wegner.—And those porcelain vases, do you see? What is that rubbish to you? Rather buy something new, pretty, up-to-date. What difference does it make whether you have the old riffraff or not? I'll offer you a decent price.

Karl Egon.—Is it possible that you have come from Danzig on account of the wardrobes and vases, Mr. Wegner?

Wegner.—Nope. I came on account of something else. Just ask your father about all the uses to which I can be put. Your father knows all about me.

Karl Egon.—Then out with it.

Wegner.—I have done your father many a favor, I may say that truthfully. You know how that goes. One good turn deserves another. *He* doesn't act *small.* That's no more than just. It has always been a clean business deal with him. "What can you do?" "What do you have to offer?" "What have you?" And when it gets that far along, *spot cash!* No bargain, no cash!

Karl Egon (*impatiently*).—Well, and then?

Wegner.—You see, excellent sir, for as good a customer as your father, a fellow will do something special once in a while, even if it costs a bit more time and work. After all a fellow knows it is not in vain. Of course it will come in again on the other hand. Well, I tell you I have brought your father something fine today. Something fine as a fiddle! Something exquisite! (*He has pulled out his letter case, rummages about in it and takes out a folded document.*)

Karl Egon (*it begins to dawns on him*).—Does that have any connection with the meadow land over there?

Wegner (*hands him the document*).—Read for yourself, fine sir. Read for yourself. Convince yourself with your own eyes.

Karl Egon.—This is an attested copy, I see.

Wegner.—Attested by a notary public! Why, of course! All genuine. All tested. Not an iota wrong. Copied and recorded word for word from the old Hohenau register. Do you see the notary's signature here?

Karl Egon.—Why, where did you raise that?

Wegner.—Do you mean the register? Where do you suppose I picked it up? At the court house, of course. Where else, do you think? At the court house at Danzig. Up stairs in the attic where all the old documents and mortgage registers, and all the stuff down from the days of Methuselah lies around in confusion.

Karl Egon.—How did the notion ever strike you at all?

Wegner.—That I will tell, my excellent gentleman. That is a very simple affair. It has hardly been three months since your father came to Danzig one fine day and met me on the market-place and said to me: "See here, man alive," he said, "you can do me a great favor. You know how I stand with Voss. You always have had it in for Voss a bit too, haven't you?"——Now your father is quite right on that point, I *have* it in for Voss, and I will attend to him some day, well enough.

Karl Egon.—Why, what harm did Voss do you?

Wegner.—What harm he did me? None at all. But I do say, I will not allow such a fellow to look down upon me. Why, he hardly knows a fellow on the street. I know very well why. Because I have had to give up, and he hasn't for the present. Just wait a bit, old boy, I'll show you a thing or two.

Karl Egon.—Well, yes, and what else? What else?

Wegner.—So then I was speaking to your father; one word leads to another. Your father tells me of the meadow land; that it by rights does not belong to Voss at all, that it is supposed to be village property.——Now I had heard that again and again from my father. *He* was a magistrate in the village, as you probably know. We talked about that many a time, how the Vosses put the land into their pocket by snatchgrab (*he makes a gesture*), as it were, back in some old year. And so I said to your father, "Old chap," said I, "only one thing will do the work. Evidence! Evidence!" "Get me the evidence," said he. "I'll get you the evidence," said I. "If it can be had at all, I'll land it." "Good," said he. Settled.

And now I went straight to the court house, because I said to myself, at the court house the books and documents are surely still to be found, and I got next to one of those old court recorders with whom I am on good terms, and I got permission to look around up in the attic, and I tell you, as luck would have it——

Karl Egon (*meanwhile has read the document through*).—According to that it is all correct, the meadow is really village property, as father has always said.

Wegner.—Do you see, my dear sir, now isn't that worth a little lump of gold, that scrap of paper? A lump of gold even among relatives!

Karl Egon (*calmly*).—I am sorry, Mr. Wegner, I cannot make use of your document in spite of all that. Just take it back. (*He holds out the paper to him.*)

Wegner (*bounds back*).—How so? What is the meaning of that? Do you mean to say that something about it is wrong? Does something fail to jibe?

Karl Egon.—I don't mean to say that; the document *does* seem to be quite correct, else it would hardly have been attested by the notary.

Wegner.—Now then! What else do you want, fine sir? I just tell you seize your opportunity, seize it! You may be glad to get some weapon in your hand against Voss. Something in writing. In any other way you will not catch up with him.

Karl Egon (*smiling*).—Possibly I shall, after all. Possibly you are mistaken!

Wegner (*maliciously*).—You suppose, do you, my dear sir, Voss will knuckle to you on account of your beautiful eyes, an independent rascal like him? Nope, that's where you're off. *We* know him better! If your father were only here! He wouldn't beat about the bush in this way. The devil take it, that he had to take sick! Damned muddle!

Karl Egon (*calmly*).—Here, take your paper and go on. And in order that you may see that father has the same opinion of it as I, I will just tell you, Mr. Voss and Reverend Siebert are with father at this moment and are having a heart to heart talk.

Wegner (*nonplussed*).—What are they doing? Having a heart to heart talk?

Karl Egon.—A reconciliation is taking place.

Wegner.—Your father and Voss are having a heart to heart talk? You are surely a little off, sir!

Karl Egon.—You see we no longer need your document.

Wegner (*eagerly reaches for the document*).—Give it here! Give it here!

Karl Egon.—Here it is! And now good-bye!

Wegner (*angrily puts the document into his pocket*).—You will come to me some fine day yet! You will come to me yet! You and your father! I will bet my neck!

Karl Egon.—Now what if you are mistaken?

Wegner.—Voss and your father get along! And the neighboring here to proceed calmly, and Voss remain here at his very nose, as if the whole quarrel had not sprung up because they are too close together, and now all at once they are expected to embrace and sing hallelujah——! Nope, fine sir, you can't make Wegner believe such a thing. I will just simply laugh at that. I'll just laugh at it. (*He goes to the door at the left.*)

Karl Egon.—But, I say, you *have* had work and expense in connection with the affair. If an indemnification——

Wegner (*remains standing in the door*).—I thank you, sir. I thank you very much! Don't go to useless trouble!

Karl Egon.—Well, you surely haven't done this for mere pleasure.

Wegner.—You suppose, do you, that an ousted little property owner, one that is compelled to eat the leavings of other men's tables, cannot allow himself a pleasure on his own hook?

Karl Egon.—A strange genius!

Wegner (*with malicious titter*).—You see, sir, your father sat here in the village pond of Hohenau like a full grown pike, and the rest of us land owners were the little smelt, which he swallowed one after another. Then I say to myself after all, Why shouldn't he swallow the last smelt that is still left? Why should the one in any way be ahead of the rest and exalt himself so much above the rest of us? Do you understand that? Then, after all, I'll help the pike, and am glad that the other smelt fares no better than I.

Karl Egon (*turns away*).—Well, you will hardly come out even at that.

Wegner.—Deferring is not equal to quashing. I can wait, dear sir. I can wait quite a while. And if, some day, you need my address, then just inquire of your father or your overseer. You can get me on the spot. Good-bye, dear sir, good-bye. (*He departs with several bows.*)

Karl Egon (*looks after him, shrugging his shoulders, turns toward the front at the right, where at that moment the door is opened and* PASTOR

SIEBERT *comes out with* VOSS. *Sees the* PASTOR.)—Well, Mr. Siebert, how are matters? Everything settled nicely?

Pastor (*approaches him*).—Give me your hand, my young friend! Give me your hand! (*He seizes his hand and shakes it.*)

Karl Egon.—One can tell by your face, all has gone well.

Pastor.—Yes, I am very glad! Glad from the bottom of my heart.

Karl Egon (*steps up to* VOSS, *who has remained standing at the door and stares ahead gloomily*).—I think we can also shake hands now, Mr. Voss? (*He extends his hand.*)

Voss.—I suppose that is a part of it. (*He shakes the proffered hand with some hesitation.*)

Karl Egon.—We have never had any difficulty, anyhow, you and I.

Voss (*still reticent and on his guard*).—Are you so sure about that?

Karl Egon (*with animation*).—It was certainly the most rational thing that you could do, you and father, that you have made up.

Pastor (*stepping up to them*).—It was the visible will of God. Therefore it *had* to come about.

Karl Egon.—This everlasting quarreling about nothing at all has always gone against my grain. What is the upshot of it all? Nothing! Useless waste of energy, and that I detest. Either peace or honorable war to the knife. I believe, Mr. Voss, you can subscribe to that?

Voss (*looks at him*).—Yes, I can subscribe to that.

Karl Egon.—Well, I hope things can be settled amicably between us.

Voss.—Of course you know the proverb: Our hopes and expectations——

Karl Egon.—Oh, pshaw! I will not allow myself to be frightened by proverbs. You see, Voss, once and for all, we are neighbors, and presumably will remain neighbors for some time——

Voss.—Yes, that's what I think too!

Karl Egon (*continuing*).—And so we must depend upon each other! You cannot deprive us of water——

Voss.—That would depend upon a trial, I say to myself!

Karl Egon.—No, no, dear Mr. Voss, you cannot do that, for we are backed up too well. You cannot do that! But, after all we cannot crowd you out of the village by force——

Voss.—No, that would hardly be possible!

Karl Egon (*continuing*).—And even if we could, we do not want to.

Pastor.—That is right, my dear young friend. These are good steadfast words.

Karl Egon.—So I propose that we come to an amicable agreement and try to get on together, as long as we are still neighbors.

Voss.—I suppose you want to sell and move to the city?

Karl Egon.—I? No! That is not my intention!

Voss.—Well, neither is it mine! Certainly not mine!

Karl Egon.—Why, that will all straighten out. We will talk about that later some time! At all events remember what I have told you, Voss! Either peace and rational agreement or war to the knife! An alternative is impossible for us! Don't forget that!

Voss.—I'll plant that where it will keep!

Pastor (*stands with hands folded*).—Lord, how I thank Thee that I have succeeded in the difficult task! How I thank Thee that Thou hast helped me! (*He follows* Voss *quickly down the steps into the garden, beyond the foot-bridge and to the right where they disappear.*)

Karl Egon (*looks after them still for a moment, murmurs to himself, half audibly*).—And I'll get you after all! I'll get you after all! (*He turns toward the front door at the right, just as it is suddenly opened violently, starts back.*) Father!

Rosenhagen (*totters in, looking about with a feverish expression in his eyes*).—Where is he?—— Is he gone?

Karl Egon (*frightened*).—Why, father! What is the matter? Is no one with you?

Rosenhagen (*feverishly*).—Where is Voss?—— I am asking where is Voss?

Karl Egon.—Voss has just gone with the pastor. Why do you still ask for him?

Rosenhagen.—Fetch him back! Why, the whole thing is in vain, of course! Absolutely in vain.

Karl Egon.—But for what reason?—— Didn't the pastor say that all passed off well?

Rosenhagen.—The pastor is as stupid as a goose egg! Fetch back Voss to me!

Karl Egon.—Yes, yes, it can all be done. But first of all do sit down! Standing is a bad thing for a sick body.

Rosenhagen (*angrily*).—I am not sick. Don't rejoice prematurely! I will still hold my own!

Karl Egon (*slowly leads him to a chair at the table*).—Certainly!—— Certainly! First of all you need rest.

Rosenhagen (*remains standing, clenches his fist*).—Now who *did* put

it into my head that I should make up with Voss? Who has played me that trick?

Karl Egon (*again tries to lead him on*).—Just come, father! Come along! It will all turn out right!

Rosenhagen.—As if I did not know what he secretly thought, when he shook hands with me! As if I did not know that it was all sham on his part, because he could not help himself before the pastor!

Karl Egon.—If you know that, father, why do you not do likewise? Sham for sham! Get at the enemy with his own weapons!

Rosenhagen (*looks at him nonplussed, then more calmly*).—After all you are not quite as much off color as I have always supposed!

Karl Egon.—I am of another color! Must all of us be alike?

Rosenhagen.—You are quite a bit like your mother. She also had her own way on all occasions. That is why I just allowed you to go your own way.

Karl Egon.—You *have* done that, and I am thankful to you for it. But now come and sit down.

Rosenhagen.—No, no, let me stand! I feel better when I can stand. I must have air! Air!

Karl Egon.—Then support yourself, at least!

Rosenhagen (*supports himself on his arm. The two stand in the center of the hall, partly turning toward the garden*).—One thing you must now promise me, Karl, or I cannot *die* in peace!

Karl Egon.—Why, father!

Rosenhagen.—Yes, yes, say nothing! I feel it clearly! Something in my breast must be asunder. There is a kind of rattling and sawing.

Karl Egon.—That will be restored again, father!

Rosenhagen.—Nothing will be restored again. My time is up! But I do not want to depart this life before you have promised me something.

Karl Egon.—If it is in my power.

Rosenhagen (*points out*).—Look, Karl, the land out there, almost up to the black forests. I acquired all that, and what does not come from me has come from my father. It hasn't been seventy years since your grandfather moved in here. Very modestly, indeed, did we begin, and today!—— Well, you know our position today. It all would have been fine enough, if we had not had that beggar on the other side, that scoundrel on our nose! Isn't that a shame? Far and wide everything belongs to one, and at one's very door one is not even master! I feel it strangle me when I think of it.

Karl Egon.—Calm yourself, father! What is to be done about it?

Rosenhagen (*straightens up*).—Karl, promise me that you will kill off that malicious beggar over there!

Karl Egon (*excited*).—How can I promise that?

Rosenhagen (*without listening to him*).—Promise me that you will kill him off! I have not lived to carry it out! If I had acquired the evidence in regard to the meadow land, I should have had him in the snare. But now it is too late for me. Now it's your turn. You must kill him off. That is the heritage that I bequeath to you!

Karl Egon.—And if I handle him amicably?

Rosenhagen.—Karl, you are young and you don't know the world. I tell you, peace and friendship are impossible for you and him. One of you must fall! See to it that he falls, not you! That much you owe to me.

Karl Egon.—Good, if you are right, if no alternative remains, I will promise you that.

Rosenhagen.—Will you shake hands on that?

Karl Egon (*smiling*).—You may depend upon me! I will stand my ground as well as I can.

Rosenhagen.—And yield before no one and at nothing as long as you live?

Karl Egon.—As long as I live. Yes, I promise you that.

Rosenhagen (*looks at him sharply*).—Not even if a certain woman comes and says she does not like it here in the country, and that you are to go away to the city with her?

Karl Egon (*unsteady for a moment*).—I don't quite understand you.

Rosenhagen.—You suppose, do you, that I know nothing of your correspondence with Hermine Diesterkamp?

Karl Egon.—I am willing for you to know it.

Rosenhagen.—Well, I am urging no objections. Take her if she wants you! But train her anew. She is like her mother. I know the type. She will not be contented anywhere for a long time if you do not train her properly.

Karl Egon.—I believe I know Hermine better!

Rosenhagen.—What are you going to do if she longs to be away and wants to draw you with her?

Karl Egon.—I have given you my word, father. I shall keep that.

Rosenhagen.—Good! Then I am calm! Then I'm calm. And then you are my good son! My good son!

Karl Egon.—But now, do come. I'll take you to bed!

Rosenhagen.—Yes, put me to bed. I can scarcely keep my feet. I must have sleep.

Karl Egon (*leads him to the door*).—So. Do calm yourself! Slowly, slowly! Now you will take a rest.

Rosenhagen.—Now I want to rest. Haven't I earned it? (*Remains standing once more, raises his hand.*) But if you break your word, Karl, I will raise my hand from the grave and fetch you after me!

Karl Egon.—Never fear, father. On this ground I shall stand and fall! (*He slowly leads him out at the right.*)

Curtain.

SECOND ACT

Hall in the manor house as in the first act. The table in the center is cleared. On it stands a bouquet in a vase, beside which there are plates and glasses. Before the sofa at the left near the front a table and several easy chairs. The rest is not changed.

It is a sunny autumn day early in September. The folding doors leading into the garden are open as before. As in the first act one looks beyond flower beds and garden paths, beyond the brook and meadow into the blue distance.

MINNIE *is occupied setting the table at the right near the front.* MARTHA *is directing the work. She is dressed in mourning.* OVERSEER RATHKE *is leaning his back against the large table in the center.*

Minnie (*busily at work*).—And so the Miss is really not going to eat with the rest?

Martha.—No, four places. I have already had my breakfast. I don't care for anything more.

Minnie (*counting on her fingers*).—Our old lady's one, our young man's two, the visitin' Miss is three, and the pretty young man's four.

Martha (*smiling*).—The pretty young man? How clever you are!

Minnie (*lively*).—That's a pretty young man, the visitin' lady's brother. Don't ye think *we* have eyes too?

Rathke (*who up to the present has looked on in silence*).—Well, I will! Such a wretch!

Minnie (*over her shoulder*).—Oh! What of you!

Rathke (*half grumbling*).—Such a darned wretch!

Minnie (*to* MARTHA).—And he is so obligin' to *us*. Just think of it, Miss, what he said t' me yesterday, when I got his bed ready——

Martha.—Well, what *did* he say?

Minnie (*beaming*).—He said, "Minnie, my sweet angel!" Ever hear anything like that, Miss? My sweet angel!

Rathke (*blurting out*).—Now she's gone plumb daft!

Minnie.—Cross my heart, that's what he said t' me!

Martha (*laughs and motions to her to desist*).—Well, well, hurry and get through. The folks may be back soon.

Minnie.—It was just strikin' eight when Mr. Rosenhagen rode away with the young lady and the young man!

Martha.—And now it is after ten. So they must be back soon. Just hurry up!

Minnie.—But it is really wrong, Miss, that you ain't goin' to eat with 'em.

Martha.—Attend to your own affairs! I will look out for myself.

Minnie (*looking at the table which has been set*).—Is that right now, Miss?

Martha (*arranging a few more details at the table*).—Yes, and now the plates and glasses.

Mninie (*goes to the table in the center*).—Right off, Miss, right off!

Martha (*also goes to table in the center*).—Not all at once! Wait, I'll help you!

Minnie (*has taken the plates in her left arm, and reaches for the wine glasses with her right hand*).—N——n, Miss, never mind! I can do the whole thing myself.

Martha (*interfering*).—Oh, Minnie!——Minnie!

Minnie (*surprised*).—Why, what's the matter, Miss?

Martha.—How often have I preached to you not to put your dirty fingers in the glasses! And now you are doing so after all!

Minnie (*with self-reproach*).—I don't know, I'm always a thinkin'!

Rathke.—She thinks, and that gives it a better flavor!

Martha.—Just carry your plates over first. I must wipe out the glasses once more anyhow!

Minnie (*steps to the sofa table with the plates. She distributes them and looks over toward* MARTHA).—Is it true, Miss, the story that they are tellin' in the village?

Martha (*wiping out the glasses*).—Why, what are they telling?

Minnie (*with an important air*).—Well, that Mr. Rosenhagen 's goin' t' marry the young lady that's visitin'? Is that true?

Martha (*short*).—How do I know? Why don't you ask him yourself?

Minnie (*naively*).—Why, no, I can't do that. You surely don't mean that, Miss!

Martha (*with acerbity*).—Then don't indulge in such stupid talk!

Minnie.—It just seemed t' me that they'll have t' get engaged beforehand, if they want t' get married, and mebbe they'll get engaged *today!* ——(*She has come back to the table in the center, accidentally pushes a glass from the table, which falls down and breaks.*) Goodness, gracious! and so forth and so on!

Martha.—Now, that's a nice mess!

Rathke (*at the same time*).—Heaven and earth!

Martha (*calmly*).—Get a whisk broom and sweep it up! (MINNIE *goes back to the door at the right.*) While you are at it, bring another glass along! (MARTHA *takes the other wine glasses and carries them to the sofa table.*) No, no, never mind, there was one too many anyhow. We need only four. I am not going to drink with them.

Minnie.—I'll run and git the broom. (*Exit.*)

Martha (*at the sofa table*).—What do you say to that, Rathke?

Rathke (*who has remained standing quietly at the table in the center*). To what?

Martha.—That the glass is broken!

Rathke.—If the old women have their way, it probably means something or other.

Martha (*smiling*).—Must the old women always be right after all?

Rathke (*strokes his beard thoughtfully*).—I have to keep thinking of that fellow over there all the time today. (*He points out into the garden.*)

Martha.—That is not so strange! This is the day, isn't it, when his time for deliberation expires?

Rathke.—Yes, the two weeks are up today. Now we'll see.

Martha.—What do you think, Rathke? Do you suppose he'll accept?

Rathke.—How can a fellow size him up? (*He points out again.*) I do not trust him *this* much. He reminds me of a martin after chickens!

Martha (*evasively*).—Karl imagines with the greatest assurance that they will reach an agreement, that he will sell.

Rathke.—Let's hope for the best.

Martha (*as before*).—Well, really it can't come to Voss more favorably! Eighty thousand marks for that little farm! He'll never get that much in all his life again!

Rathke (*raging*).—Over twelve thousand marks an acre! Why, that's twice as much as it's worth!

Minnie (*comes in again with a large brush broom and a coal shovel*). That's it, Miss, and now I'll sweep up the pieces.

Martha (*looking at her casually*).—I suppose that you were not able to find any other broom, how?

Rathke.—Why, that looks as if she was to clean up for Karo in the dog house!

Minnie (*while she sweeps up the pieces*).—Oh, the infernal whisk-broom! I hunted and hunted!

Martha.—Of course! Who knows where that is flying around again?

Minnie (*has swept*).—Anything else t' do about the table?

Martha.—No! You may go! Are all of the rooms clean?

Minnie.—Everything in order.

Martha.—Dusted?

Minnie (*frightened*).—Oh, merciful providence!

Martha.—I do say, you forget the most important part. I should like to know where your mind is.

Minnie.—That's because I'm always havin' such thoughts, Miss.

Rathke.—Yes, because you always have your fellows on your brain! That is the whole thing.

Minnie (*throwing back her head*).—I suppose Mr. Rathke thinks I have *no* feelin's? And what if it is only a fellow? Mr. Rathke don't pay any attention to me, does he?

Rathke (*advances a step toward her*).—You darned huzzy!

Minnie (*running away*).—You just dare to hit me!——I'll scream.

Martha.—Now go and dust and be quiet! She's a bit off!

Minnie.—Why, don't you see me go? I am goin' as fast as I can! (*She goes out through rear door at the right with broom and shovel.*)

Martha.—Do you see, Rathke, that is what you get!

Rathke.—Such a thing! Hm! She deserves a lash with the horse-whip.

Martha (*steps to the sofa table, sighing*).—Yes, yes, such a thing has an easy time of it.

Rathke.—Well, I say, are you down in the mouth again?

Martha.—I am just imagining how it will be here soon! What will become of everything here, when I am gone some day. Everything will be turned up side down, you know. The old house is going to be taken

down *too*. How do you like the new castle that Karl is wanting to build? Hasn't he shown you the plan?

Rathke (*shrugging his shoulders*).—For my part, it might remain as it is. I have always felt quite snug in my room that looks out on the barnyard.

Martha.—Of course, he is doing all that merely for her sake. He certainly would not have had such an idea of his own accord.

Rathke (*walks to and fro impatiently*).—I do say, these women folks! ——These women folks!

Martha (*craftily and as taking a start*).—I should just like to know why he absolutely wants to build the castle on the other side of the mill race.

Rathke.—That is surely on account of the view, isn't it, Miss?

Martha.—Oh, yes! On account of the view!

Rathke.—Why, yes! Isn't the distillery to be built here, and that would then be in the way of the view. That's the reason he's putting the new building on the other side. Well, he *has* more room there. There he has the meadow land and Voss's large garden. Those put together will make a fine large park. And Voss's buildings, well, he'll simply have them torn down.

Martha.—Is that so? He is going to have them torn down?

Rathke.—Yes, what can he do with them? They are only in his way!

Martha.—I see, I see, this is going to be a regular seat of the aristocracy.

Rathke.—Yes, as if it was for a baron or a count. All that he needs is the "von"!

Martha (*with a strange smile*).—Won't our little Karl be delighted, when he can enter there with her and spend his honeymoon in his beautiful new castle! Oh, *that* pride!

Rathke.—Oh, if it were only that far along!

Martha.—Aha, what if Voss does not care to sell after all? If he simply says no bargain for me, I am going to stay here, and that is all there is to it.

Rathke.—That's just the hitch, Miss. That's just what is up now!

Martha.—Then all of the fine plan with the castle and the park and the other pomp will come to naught, will it not? Then they must continue to live in this old box of a house and must be nice and contented with things as they are, so narrow and inconvenient and so very unsuitable for distinguished people. Well, I *do* say!

Rathke (*as before*).—There will be some way out of that, Miss. There will be some way out of that.

Martha (*without paying attention to him*).—And the elegant furniture which she of course will order in Paris or goodness knows where, that will look fine here in these low rooms. How will she place it at all? There is no room for it at all. Just see, Rathke, it will be just like her to go back on the engagement!

Rathke (*surprised*).—Not until they *are* engaged. Why, they aren't *engaged* yet!

Martha (*fervently*).—You will see, she will not let it come to the point of an engagement at all! She will go away before it comes to that!

Rathke (*shaking his head*).—Why, you talk exactly as if you was tickled at the thought of it.

Martha (*veiled*).—I have an idea *you* don't care much about the new castle? You'd like it best if all remained as of old?

Rathke (*incensed*).—What I'd *like,* or *wouldn't* like, Miss, that ain't the question at all. I'll talk to *you* about that and to no other person.

Martha (*smiling*).—Do you know how you look now, Rathke?

Rathke.—I don't care a darn how I look!

Martha (*unswervingly*).—Like our old crabbed Karo! Just that way!

Rathke.—I don't care! May be Karo will bark at his master once in a while when he is out of sorts, but look out for the fellow who would even frown at his master!

Martha.—You see, Rathke, domestic animals are not all alike. May be there is a little something of the genus cat about us women.

Rathke.—That is quite possible. I can't bear the darned things.

Martha.—Don't say that. Cats are sometimes very affectionate.

Rathke (*enraged*).—That's all the same to me. I only say, if our young man wants to build himself a castle, that's his business. And if he wants to buy Voss's farm from him, that's his business too! I'm not to dip into that.

Martha.—But two are necessary for a sale. Can't Voss say no?

Rathke.—There will be ways of doing it all right. It's fixed so people don't have their way about all things. Not even Voss.

Martha (*suddenly remembering*).—You are surely not thinking of the fellow who was here once before? What was his name? The fellow with the document? The one whom Karl turned out?

Rathke.—I don't mean to find fault with young Mr. Rosenhagen, but that was the greatest nonsense that he didn't make a bargain with Wegner,

when he was so willing! If he'd only gone right ahead and taken the certificate! It's a mighty good thing that it can be fixed up yet!

Minnie (*opens the door at the right, partially enters, and whispers with an important air*).—Miss Riemann?

Martha (*turns around*).—What is it?

Minnie.—Old Mr. Voss is out there. He wants to speak to Mr. Rosenhagen.

Rathke.—Aha! Here she goes!

Minnie.—Is he to come in?

Rathke.—Stupid thing! You know Mr. Rosenhagen is out riding. Have him come back in an hour.

Martha (*who has reflected for a moment, quickly interrupts*).—No, no, just let him come in! Can't he wait until Mr. Rosenhagen returns?

Minnie.—Very well, Miss! (*Leaves quickly.*)

Rathke (*cross*).—Then I'd better *go.*

Martha.—Are you going to edge off, Rathke?

Rathke.—I don't edge off at any one and if it was old Nick himself! All that's wrong is that I can't get myself twisted into these new friendships right off.

Martha.—But you must learn how to do that now, Rathke!

Rathke (*on the way to the door*).—It takes time for that. This dog is so old that new tricks are getting hard for him. (*The rear door at the right is opened.*)

Voss (*remains standing in the door which he has entered*).—I say—Good morning!

Rathke (*likewise before the door so that they stand opposite each other, with venomous growling*).—Thanks!

Voss (*looks about*).—I suppose I am too early?

Rathke (*as before*).—It's a great honor for us!

Voss.—Of course, I am not coming on your account. I am coming to see your employer!

Rathke.—And I am only an ordinary overseer, and one of these landowners like yourself——

Voss.—Just say farmer. I am still proud of that.

Rathke.—And I am proud of being an overseer!

Voss.—Well, you see everybody has his little vanity.

Rathke.—It's only a question of whose vanity will last longest.

Voss (*suspiciously*).—I suppose you mean something or other by that?

Rathke.—What of it?

Voss.—I want an answer!

Rathke.—I will not keep on owing you the answer when the time comes. You can bet your neck on that! (*He goes out angrily through the rear door at the right, and slams the door.*)

(*Short silence.*)

Martha.—Won't you sit down, Mr. Voss?

Voss (*still near the door*).—It will hardly pay.

Martha.—Surely you are not going to remain standing until my cousin returns?

Voss.—May be I'd better drop in later once more. It will take too long anyway.

Martha (*remains near the table in the center*).—I suppose you have something important to discuss with my cousin.

Voss (*reticent*).—Yes, I suppose that's it.

Martha.—Probably something in regard to the place?

Voss.—Somewhat in that neighborhood. Yes.

Martha (*unconstrained*).—Oh, yes, I do remember, Karl was telling me something, something about buying. He wants to buy your place or something to that effect?

Voss.—Why, if you know, I don't need to go to the trouble of telling you.

Martha.—Yes, yes, now I remember. He says he has offered you a fine price.

Voss.—That depends; it's the way that you look at it.

Martha.—Why, eighty thousand marks is a fine bit of money, isn't it? Goodness!

Voss.—Maybe it *isn't* a song, that's correct. It's worth talking about.

Martha.—Oh, you will come to an agreement! I can tell by your face.

Voss.—Well, you know, quite a number of things will have to be brought up yet. It hasn't been signed yet.

Martha.—But it *will* be signed, I know that definitely!

Voss.—It's not a little matter for a man to tear himself loose from a thing to which he has clung with his whole heart. And if it were your dead uncle, I'd never do it in all my life! He could have gone and offered me twice as much.

Martha.—Yes, yes, Karl is quite different from uncle. He can just wind a person around his little finger if he tries.

Voss.—I am not one of those who allow themselves to be wound

around one's little finger. But maybe I say to myself, You are not so awfully young any more, for whom should you wear yourself out? Your oldest son is dead, the one who might have taken charge of it; the rest have their good living in the city, they will not move out here into the country anyhow, it will have to be sold *anyhow* some day when you are dead. If you get a decent price——

Martha.—Do you see how nicely my cousin has led you on?

Voss.—It isn't easy for me. And it isn't at all certain yet, that *that* is what will happen.

Martha.—I thought you had to make up your mind today?

Voss.—There is no *have to* about it. I fixed that up myself.

Martha.—Then, I suppose, much is passing through your mind now?

Voss.—A person does have his thoughts!

Martha.—I have an idea that it is a hard thing to do, to have to get out of the house of his fathers.

Voss (*turns away*).—We had better not talk of that at all!

Martha (*continuing unswervingly*).—When one imagines it all, you are hardly gone, and strange men come and tear everything down, that has been dear to you, not one stone remaining on another——

Voss (*starting*).—Not a stone remaining!—— Who——who says that?

Martha (*calmly*).—I imagine that to be terrible!

Voss (*angrily*).—I ask, who says that?

Martha.—What, pray tell?

Voss (*coming up closer to her*).—That the place is to be torn down when I'm out of it? Who says that, I ask!

Martha.—Why, isn't that the most natural thing in the world? You surely need not be surprised at that.

Voss (*has again become composed*).—Yes, yes, that is right. There is nothing surprising about that. I guess that is the only thing to expect. (*He stands there battling with grave thoughts.*)

Martha.—Why, hadn't you heard that Karl——that my cousin intends to build a large castle over on the other side of the mill race?

Voss (*suddenly*).—On my meadow land!

Martha.—Yes, because the distillery is to be located here, and in order that he may not block his view, he is going to build the castle on the other side. It is at least planned in that way.

Voss.—My place he is going to tear down, and on my meadow he is going to build a castle!

Martha.—Why, what in the world is he to do with your old dilapidated house? Why, that is only in his way.

Voss.—He should let it stand.

Voss.—He hasn't got it yet? It's not signed yet!

Martha.—But why in the world is he buying your whole farm?

Martha (*smiling*).—Your place he will tear down, and your garden with the meadow he will utilize for a park to surround the castle and in it he will live then with his beautiful young wife and will be glad that he is alive!

Voss (*struggling with himself*).—He had better not be glad before his time!

Martha.—You are not conceited enough to believe that he cannot down you?

Voss.—Well, I still have a word to say in that matter.

Martha.—Well, what if he gets after you forcibly then! What if he can bring up something against you? Something of which you do not think at all?

Voss (*starting up*).—What is the meaning of that? After all something is crooked there. Why, Rathke has also hinted something of the kind before!

Martha (*shrugging her shoulders*).—I haven't said *a thing.*

Voss (*threatening*).—He had better be careful! I will give him that much advice! (*The door at the left is opened.*)

Madam Rosenhagen (*hobbles through the door*).—What important conversation is this, pray tell?

Martha (*goes to meet her in an unconstrained manner*).—Mr. Voss is here, grandma.

Madam Rosenhagen.—So you have had a rendezvous, you two?

Martha.—You do insist on having your fun, grandma, don't you?

Madam Rosenhagen (*to* Voss).—Well, you old slugger? Come along now, and confess.

Martha.—Mr. Voss has come in regard to the sale, grandma. He wants to give Karl his answer.

(Voss, *who up to the present time has stood silent and brooding, turns to go, without a word.*)

Madam Rosenhagen.—Why, where are you going all at once? I am not going to scratch your eyes out.

Voss (*turns on his way to rear at the right*).—It is too long a wait for me. I'll come back.

Madam Rosenhagen.—Have you made up your mind now what you are going to do, or not?

Voss (*significantly*).—Yes, I think I am all straightened out with myself.

Madam Rosenhagen.—Why, you say that as if you wanted to prophesy unpleasant weather.

Voss (*already at the door*).—That must be a matter of the wind. It's blowing in a strange direction. (*He goes out slowly.*)

Madam Rosenhagen (*looks after him shaking her head*).—What in the world is the matter with him?

Martha (*taciturnly*).—You don't expect me to know, grandma.

Madam Rosenhagen.—Didn't you talk to each other pretty long? Didn't he say anything? How?

Martha.—No, nothing.

Madam Rosenhagen.—Such a bull-headed old fellow! Wasn't he already tamed entirely? And now he is as if he were mad again.

Martha (*suddenly collapses before her, sobs in despair*).—Grandma! ——Grandma!

Madam Rosenhagen (*puts her hands on Martha's head*).—Child! Child!

Martha (*beside herself*).—Oh, I am so unhappy——! So unspeakably unhappy!

Madam Rosenhagen.—Can't get him? Is the other girl going to take him away from you?

Martha (*with suppressed shriek*).—I cannot witness it! I simply cannot witness it!

Madam Rosenhagen (*caresses her*).—Now be calm! Now be quiet!

Martha (*as before*).—Slink away! That's what I'd like to do! Slink away!

Madam Rosenhagen.—That will pass off. That will all adjust itself again.

Martha (*as before*).—That can never adjust itself again! Never!

Madam Rosenhagen.—Remember what I say! That is like a dream. It amounts to nothing!

Martha (*groaning*).—I am so awfully bad!—— So bad! You haven't any idea—— The worst of it is, it can never be made good.

Madam Rosenhagen (*quizzically*).—Child!——Child! What have you done? Tell me the truth!

Martha (*quickly rises, with sudden composure*).—I have done nothing! I have no reproaches for myself! I can answer for every-

thing! (*The door at the left is opened violently,* KARL EGON *enters and draws* HERMINE *after him by the hand. The two are in riding costume.*)

Karl Egon.—So. Now here we are again!

Hermine (*lively and beaming*).—Well, that *was* a ride for you! The old women made wry faces as we dashed by. We fairly went storming along! Oh, that was fine!

Madam Rosenhagen.—Now, that's another one of those new fangled institutions, that women get on horses. In *my* day one would have given them a fine look.

Hermine.—Oh, mercy! Let them open their *noses and mouths!* What do we care? You fly by. Tomorrow you are somewhere else, and day after tomorrow somewhere else again.

Karl Egon.—Tut! Tut! I also have something to say when it comes to that!

Hermine (*laughing*).—You don't suppose that I care to die here, to say nothing of *living* here?

Karl Egon (*seriously*).—A half hour ago you did not speak that way.

Hermine.—Half an hour ago! Good heavens! Why don't you say an eternity ago, while you are at it? Now I am talking this way! Isn't that plausible to you?

Karl Egon (*intensely*).—No, that isn't plausible to me at all.

Hermine.—Don't be angry, my friend! Don't you be angry.

Karl Egon.—Do you expect me to remain calm at that?

Hermine.—Now will you remove that angry furrow? Come, I will wipe it away. (*Strokes his forehead.*)

Madam Rosenhagen (*sitting at the table in the center*).—Now tell me all the places where you have been rousting about. I suppose you were pretty far away?

Hermine.—Oh, yes, that depends upon how one looks at it. As far as the woods over there.

Karl Egon.—I had to show Hermine my whole territory for once, you see, don't you?

Madam Rosenhagen (*striking her hands together*).—You got as far as those woods? Is it among the possibilities?

Hermine.—Yes, right up to them. So close that we could seize the twigs. A few steps more and we should have been right in the pitch dark forest. I almost felt like leading off your Egon for good.

Karl Egon.—You would not have succeeded in doing that, sweetheart. Do not forget that I am planted here and have duties.

Hermine.—Duties! A fine word! Shame on you!

Madam Rosenhagen.—Where you hail from, where you are at home, I suppose there is nothing but pleasure?

Hermine.—I am at home *nowhere,* Mrs. Rosenhagen. As for the rest, you are quite right. I want to enjoy my life as thoroughly as I can. Duties I will relinquish to other people.

Karl Egon.—To you the word may be foreign and strange. To me, it stands for my whole future.

Hermine (*steps up to* KARL EGON *as if in jest*).—So you would not have allowed me to lead you away? Not even if I had tried good and hard? Just imagine if I had tried very, very hard? (*She looks at him alluringly.*)

Karl Egon (*moved*).—Of course, it would depend upon the course.

Hermine (*as before*).—Deep into the forests, to the place where it becomes light again, where the world begins again. My beautiful world!

Karl Egon.—Just try, will you!

Hermine.—Why, of course! This very afternoon! Or tomorrow morning! Or what I should prefer, at once! On the spot!

Madam Rosenhagen.—Well, I do say, you are not going to get right on horseback again, and off with a dash! Why, there is your breakfast.

Hermine (*mysteriously*).—I should like to see whether I can assert my will.

Karl Egon (*seriously*).—You must consider that I *also* have a will!

Hermine.—He says that with so much *pride!* As if we women did not get the best of all of you, when we want to! (*With a sudden turn to* MARTHA.) Why, *you* aren't saying a thing, my dear Miss. Don't you think I am right?

Martha.—Why, *my* opinion doesn't amount to anything!

Hermine.—Oh, yes, you are one of those good, good lambs, that find it ravishing to be devoured by the wolf.

Martha (*ironically*).—Do you see how *well* you know me!

Madam Rosenhagen.—I say, we women have all had our little legacy from Satan. That goes back to the days of paradise.

Hermine (*to* KARL EGON *who has listened smiling*).—I might be tempted to lock horns with you.

Karl Egon.—Why don't you? Why don't you? I could not wish for anything better.

Hermine.—Now then, when are we going to ride to our forests again?

Karl Egon.—Whenever you wish to.

Hermine.—And then I'll simply lead *you* away. Then good-bye home and everything!

Karl Egon.—How, do you suppose, you will go about that?

Hermine.—Just wait until we are in the woods!

Madam Rosenhagen.—I don't know what you mean by eternally talking of your forests! I *never* got that far away. It was always too far for me.

Hermine.—Too far? Why, it goes as if you were flying when you are on horseback.

Madam Rosenhagen.—I was saying, wasn't I, that in my day horseback was unknown around here for women. I *did* get to the city in the carriage, but those forests of yours over there, I never saw except at a distance.

Hermine.—Why, then the most beautiful of all escaped you. Beyond them the world really first sets in.

Karl Egon.—Oh! When a person knows how that world is, he can get on without it quite easily.

Hermine.—Possibly you. Not I. Formerly you spoke differently too.

Karl Egon.—Some time a person surely must find himself and know for what he is cut out.

Madam Rosenhagen.—Well, may be, some day I'll get as far away as you young goslings. It isn't all over yet. What do you say, Martha, shall we start out and gad some time?

Martha.—Possibly the time is soon at hand when I shall get to see what lies back of the forest.

Hermine (*quickly*).—How's that? Are you thinking of leaving Hohenau?

Martha.—Possibly.

Hermine.—Wouldn't it be better for *you,* if you remained here?

Martha.—You suppose, do you, that you are the *only* person who has courage?

Karl Egon.—I think you are acting strangely today, Martha.

Martha.—You think so, do you, Karl? (*She turns to the rear to go away.*)

Karl Egon.—Why, where are you going now? Aren't you going to eat with us?

Martha.—Just eat. I have no appetite! (*Off quickly through rear door at right.*)

Karl Egon (*looks after her for a moment, shakes his head, then says*)—Well, what about breakfast? I am infernally hungry.

Hermine.—And may be *I* am not. I'll just hurry and change my dress first.

Karl Egon.—Why? Just remain as you are. You look grand! I'd like to kiss you right off!

Hermine (*throws him a kiss*).—Pst! You are not to be consulted.

Madam Rosenhagen.—You needn't be embarrassed on my account. For all I care you can all stand on your heads anyhow. Nothing surprises me any more.

Hermine.—Hurrah! That's just my predicament. When a person rousts about daily with bold painters or crack-brained musicians, nothing seems funny to him any more.

Madam Rosenhagen.—Where in the world is my good friend Fritz all this blessed time? I don't see him at all.

Hermine (*smiling*).—My brother? Good heavens! He remained far behind. I think the milksop is riding a nag for the first time today.

Madam Rosenhagen.—If only nothing happens to him.

Hermine.—He can't do more than fall off, can he?

Madam Rosenhagen.—And break his neck!

Hermine.—Oh, no, Freddie is too careful for that.

Karl Egon.—Yes, it's clear that you are not like him! Thunder and lightning! You make the most dashing cavalryman look like a fool!

Hermine.—That has been in my blood since my childhood.

Madam Rosenhagen.—I suppose a matter of inheritance!

Hermine.—Yes, I am proud of the fact that my dear mama bequeathed that to me.

Karl Egon.—For that very reason you will be excellently adapted to the country. I can see you now playing the part of the bold mistress of the castle.

Hermine.—Me, with my Bohemian blood? *Heavens,* you are weak-minded! Why, they will put me out the very first day! Why, I eat little children! I'll cast a spell on your cattle! No, no, no. I am not fit to be among peasants.

Karl Egon (*sharply*).—I take it that you are jesting. A person can never tell about you in such matters!

Hermine.—Do you expect me to sit here with you and look like a blockhead?

Karl Egon.—Moreover I look upon it as an honor to be called a peasant, if that is what you mean to call me.

Hermine.—Whew! What dignity! I humble myself!

Madan Rosenhagen.—And do you expect to gig through the world by express in this fashion all of your life?

Hermine.—Why not, pray tell? Wherever there is a jolly and free and easy time, there I pitch my tent. Six months in Munich, then again in Paris or in Rome, one has his circle everywhere, you know! Painters, actors, poets! They are the worst of all. They immediately fall in love. Oh, it is a wonderfully crazy life. Some day or other one turns up, is received in triumph. Some day or other one is gone and the poets follow one up with the most fervent verses. But one remains the maiden from afar, a kind of Persephone, whom no one can hold. (*To* KARL EGON *with a coquettish gesture.*) That's what I like, my friend! And now let us eat breakfast. I'll take your arm, Mrs. Rosenhagen. (*She takes her arm.*)

Madam Rosenhagen (*brings down her cane with a thud*).—Do you mean to insist by all means upon making me old and rickety, you young rascal?

Hermine (*escorting her to the sofa*).—How does it feel, when a person is old, Mrs. Rosenhagen? Isn't that awfully monotonous?

Madam Rosenhagen.—Nonsense! Every day means something new to me. I rejoice at every day, when I awake and see the sunlight and can say to myself, I am still on earth and I am going to stay on earth for a while yet.

Hermine.—Strange!

Karl Egon.—Do you see, Hermine, that's what comes of living in the country and close to nature. A person gets old doing that.

Hermine.—But I don't *want* to get old. I want to stay young as long as it is possible. Here a person rusts and sours.

Madam Rosenhagen.—Well, then I must just about be a regular vinegar barrel.

Hermine.—That just depends upon who it is. It wouldn't do for me. You haven't any idea how I crave pleasure. I want to drain my youth to the dregs. No one is to say of me that I missed anything.

Karl Egon.—And some day, when youth is gone?

Hermine.—Then I'll climb the Finsteraarhorn and plunge down.

Karl Egon (*ironically*).—Grand!

Hermine (*looks at him smiling*).—I imagine that would be very fine. A moment and one is gone. You can join me, of course, if you care to!

Karl Egon (*shaking his head*).—O Hermine! Hermine! Don't feign being something that you are not. A person could really get in doubt about you.

Hermine.—Why, you don't know me at *all.* You men don't know us any how. You all form a wrong conception of us. But we know *you so well*——(*During the preceding sentences they have taken their places at the table, the grandmother on the sofa,* KARL EGON *and* HERMINE *on the chairs to the right and left of her, opposite each other. During the following sentences, they are eating.*)

Hermine (*tries to give something to the old woman*).—I am going to give something to you, Mrs. Rosenhagen.

Madam Rosenhagen (*makes an impatient gesture*).—Now I have enough of this everlasting mothering! If it doesn't stop, I'll get up and leave you alone. That's what you would like.

Hermine (*eating*).—Oh, please, no.

Karl Egon (*eating likewise*).—Your aim seems to be to make me angry today.

Hermine.—Must I not make the parting as easy as possible for you?

Karl Egon (*lays down his knife and fork*).—What parting? What does that mean?

Hermine (*unconstrained*).—*Some* time the parting *must* indeed come.

Karl Egon (*excited*).—I really do not understand you.

Hermine (*to the old woman*).—Really, won't you have a slice of raw ham? Quite delicious.

Madam Rosenhagen.—When I say no, I say no. But you may give me a glass of wine. That keeps the spirits of life awake.

Karl Egon (*smiles as he fills her glass*).—Or sometimes it may put them to sleep, grandmother.

Madam Rosenhagen (*as she pensively touches her lips to her glass*).—It's with me as it is with our old pear tree in the garden.

Hermine.—Oh, yes, is it still alive?

Madam Rosenhagen.—It will still outlive many a one. But I was going to say——

Hermine.—About the pear tree.

Madam Rosenhagen.—It also is nourished by nothing but the dew and rain, by what comes from above. That is due to the fact that it has grown so high into the clouds. That it ever crawled out of the soil down there, it can hardly remember that now. (*She continues to sip pensively, gradually sinks back and falls asleep.*)

(*Short pause during which they again eat.*)

Karl Egon (*leans back in his chair*).—Wasn't that capital this morning, Hermine? The horseback ride through the misty morning?

Hermine (*likewise stops eating, nods*).—Quite capital. Yes. I love the morning, anyhow. I am an early riser. In the midst of my Bohemians I have saved that much.

Karl Egon.—Yes. Greatly to your credit. I have never known you to do anything else.

Hermine.—I am of the opinion that there is nothing finer than one of these misty autumn mornings. Then out into the unknown on one's horse——

Karl Egon (*joyously*).—Yes, and then say to one's self, That is your own soil over which you are riding along. No one has any right to interfere with you here. You owe no one an accounting here but yourself, your own free master, your own king and emperor—— Hermine, that is a feeling with which you must come in touch. That can be compared with *nothing* on earth, with nothing.

Hermine (*smiling*).—You are *still* something of a dreamer. *That* you have kept. But it *is* becoming to you.

Karl Egon.—Why, shouldn't one grow enthusiastic once in a while? That is the privilege of youth.

Hermine (*meeting his eye*).—Yes, yes, speak right on. I like to see you that way. It reminds one so much——

Karl Egon.—Of what, pray tell?

Hermine.—Of wild little Egon, and the still smaller and cute Hermine.

Karl Egon.—Wasn't that splendid, back in those days?

Hermine.—And that is why it will never return.

Karl Egon.—It is going to return now, more beautiful than ever.

Hermine.—No, no, now we are grown up and each one of us has his own peculiar hobby. I am a perverse Bohemian roaming through the world and you are an honorable estate owner who breeds swine. How could the two ever get together?

Karl Egon.—Why, that is the sheerest nonsense. Heaven knows that I have an intelligent interest in some things besides the breeding of swine. Moreover the breeding of swine is a good thing——

Hermine.—Yes, that raw ham was delicious. Did you raise that yourself?

Karl Egon (*laughing in a way*).—Now do be a bit serious.

Hermine.—I am as serious as a tomb.

Karl Egon.—I tell you, Hermine, you can't imagine what a strange fascination attaches to a soil that one's father and grandfather have already sown and harvested.

Hermine.—And so, for that reason one sits down in his four walls and vegetates right along like his father and grandfather! Greatest respect!

Karl Egon.—No! If you think that, you are entirely on the wrong track! I certainly conceive of my life as being different from that of my ancestors. I want to arrange it as large and free and above all things as beautiful as possible. You see, the fathers could not do that. They had to acquire and get all of it together first. They had the struggle. They did not get to the point of rest and enjoyment. And therefore everything had to remain as little, narrow and as limited as you see it now! That is to change now. Now a new time is coming.

Hermine.—And you want to bring that about?

Karl Egon.—Yes, I. For myself and those who depend upon me. That also, you know, the fathers were not able to do. They had to think of themselves. They had to get *ahead* first. That is my advantage now. I can incidentally also think of others.

Hermine.—I say, that's maddeningly thankless.

Karl Egon.—You know it is my intention to make my people here at Hohenau over into something like human beings. What do you say to that?

Hermine (*laughs aloud*).—Oh, you poor fellow, you!

Karl Egon (*as before*).—Yes! Yes! But a beginning *must* be made sometime. There is enormously much to do here still, anyhow.

Hermine (*lightly*).—What incredible plans you have!

Karl Egon.—Yes, I should like to show my countrymen for once, how much you can get out of the soil and out of people, if you have a few ideas and the proper spirit. Why, everything is so crude here still. All that is necessary is to bring the forces together for once. For that reason, in the first place, I shall build the distillery.

Hermine.—And the crown of it all, I suppose, the castle is expected to be. Isn't it?

Karl Egon.—Yes, that is the crown of it all. That is the sunlight on the picture.

Hermine.—Are you going to keep house there so entirely alone? I imagine that would be awfully tedious.

Karl Egon (*impatiently*).—But I do say, Hermine, how can you ask such a question? Why, for whom am I going to build my castle?

Hermine (*shrugging her shoulders*).—How can I know that?

Karl Egon—Of course I am going to build it for you! For you! Just imagine when our new castle will stand over there beyond the mill

race! Can one not live proudly and freely even there? Freer than out yonder? Can't one forget the world there? Doesn't that tempt you?

Hermine (*dreaming*).—So a real, actual castle Karl Egon is going to build for himself? See! See!

Karl Egon.—Yes, with everything that belongs to it.

Hermine (*dreaming and swaying back and forth*).—With sparkling windows, in the morning sunshine——

Karl Egon (*bends over the table to her*).—And with a beautiful mistress in it.

Hermine (*smiles at him*).—Who in the world may that be?

Karl Egon (*fervently*).—You! You! You!

Hermine (*swaying to and fro*).—Beautiful Rothtraut through the deep forest rode—— Do you know that, Egon?

Karl Egon.—Hermine, now I shall no longer let you—— Give me your hand! Tell me. Tell me finally——(*He extends his hand over the table to her.*)

Hermine.—Pst! Don't you see? Grandmother has gone to sleep. Don't disturb her.

Karl Egon.—Oh, she does not wake up so quickly when she has had her wine. That happens to her quite often now.

Hermine.—Just wait until *we* are that far along. I don't believe that any body will be able to awaken us any more then. I hope she is lying comfortably?

Karl Egon (*absent minded*).—Yes, yes, never mind her.

Hermine (*carried away at the sight of the old woman*).—To live a whole century as she has. Isn't that like a miracle, Egon?

Karl Egon.—Hermine, you still owe me your answer.

Hermine (*without paying attention*).—A whole century. And here at Hohenau besides. That requires a constitution. I believe I should grow horns or some other horrible thing. Wouldn't you too, Egon?

Karl Egon (*becoming angry*).—I see you are making light of me!

Hermine (*innocently*).—I? How so?

Karl Egon (*angrily*).—Yes, you are playing with me! I feel that more and more definitely.

Hermine (*stubbornly*).—Or *you* are playing with *me.*

Karl Egon (*forced to laugh*).—*I* with *you?* Heavens! Since when have the mice been playing with the cat?

Hermine.—Do you put so low a value upon yourself?

Karl Egon.—Oh, in dealing with you women, all of us are powerless, of course.

Hermine (*smiling at him over the table*).—O you foolish, foolish, foolish Egon. You!

Karl Egon (*carried away*).—Hermine, how beautiful you are!

Hermine (*as before*).—And you are so foolish, so foolish, so foolish, that you cannot even see your fortune.

Karl Egon (*jumps up*).—Hermine! Dearest!

Hermine (*her finger on her mouth*).—Pst! Be a good boy! Don't awaken grandmother! It is a whole century that is sleeping there.

Karl Egon (*with desperate gaiety*).—Yes, the old century. We will create a new one for ourselves.

Hermine.—You are to remain quietly in your chair, or else I shall go away at once.

Karl Egon (*sits down again*).—You are setting me crazy, Hermine.

Hermine,—That's just what you deserve. Didn't you promise me, by all that is holy, that you would go out into the world with me if I should come and get you? Here I am now!

Karl Egon (*lost in her presence*).—Yes, just as the fairy queen in the fairy tale——

Hermine.—Quite right. Who came to Tom the Rhymster. He was also just such a big, foolish lubber who pledged his head for a kiss from the fairy queen, and then would not recognize his good fortune when she came to get him. But that was of no avail to him. She took him along into her fairy kingdom, she took him along and fairly kissed him to death, the foolish boy.

Karl Egon.—Hermine! Hermine! (*He starts from his chair again.*)

Hermine (*with lifted finger*).—Pst! Be a good boy! Keep your seat! Make good your promise first!

Karl Egon.—And what if I *can* not?

Hermine.—But you *must.* You simply must.

Karl Egon.—What in the world do you expect of me? What are you planning to do with me? Do you know that I could *hate* you?

Hermine (*flattering*).—I will make you great and famous. I will give you a task that is worth while. You shall play a part in the world. And I with you—— Do you hear, I with you—— Or we will travel. We'll travel. Or we will live somewhere quietly, all to ourselves, in Paris or in Italy or somewhere. Only not here. Not here. Not in this world, which I hate, which I hate!

Karl Egon (*frightened*).—Hermine!

Hermine (*with suppressed passion*).—Yes, which I hate as much as one can at *all* hate a thing!

Karl Egon (*jumps up*).—Stop! Stop! I can no longer follow you in that.

Hermine (*rises likewise*).—Well, why not? Is it so preposterous, what you are expected to do? (*She steps up close to him whispering impressively.*) Egon! Dearest! Why what has become of your courage? Where is your pride? All stifled in fat! All choked in philistinism! Look into my eyes, my darling!

Karl Egon (*struggling with himself*).—Do not make me wild, Hermine!

Hermine (*with ardent flattery*).—Look into my eyes, my darling! Tell me that you are going with me!

Karl Egon (*stands struggling with himself violently, as if he wanted to draw her to him, but controls himself with a sudden start*).—I *can* not, Hermine.

Hermine (*whispering*).—You *can* not?

Karl Egon.—No, I *can* not, and above all I do not *want* to. I do not wish to be under obligations to anyone else for what I am and what I represent.

Hermine.—Not even to me?

Karl Egon.—No, not even to you! Least of *all* to you! I want to shape my life *myself,* great or small, just as it has been granted to me, but at any rate on my own initiative and not as the creature of any one, least of all of you.

Hermine (*bitterly*).—Is that your great love?

Karl Egon (*firmly*).—Just *because* I love you so much, that is why I do not want to be your creature.

Hermine.—Since when have you been so proud?

Karl Egon.—Since I have a goal and a mission ahead of me. Don't you understand that, dearest?

Hermine (*turns away*).—Do not call me that!

Karl Egon (*tenderly*).—Hermine——?

Hermine (*stamps her foot*).—Don't call me that any more! I will not have it!

(*The door at the left is opened violently.*)

Fritz Diesterkamp (*storms in beaming, with hair dishevelled and torn waistcoat, open all the way down*).—What an experience! What an experience!

Hermine (*strikes her hands together*).—Why, how you look! How you look!

Fritz.—Why of course, you have no idea what happened to me. It was great. Just imagine——

Madam Rosenhagen (*has awaked during the last sentence, rubs her eyes, and grumbles to herself*).—Why, what does all of this racket mean? I suppose there's a fire somewhere?

Hermine (*to* FRITZ).—Do you see, that's what comes of your stupid howling. Now you have awakened grandmother. Go right on and excuse yourself for your awkwardness.

Madam Rosenhagen (*has meanwhile become wide awake*).—You suppose, do you, that I have been sleeping?

Hermine (*roguishly*).—Just a bit, Mrs. Rosenhagen, just a little bit.

Madam Rosenhagen (*draws* FRITZ, *who has been standing near her, up to her by his sleeve*).—Just come here a bit, you young gosling, you. Let me look you over.

Fritz (*beaming*).—Don't I look fine?

Madam Rosenhagen.—Ravishing. In what gutter have you been wallowing?

Hermine.—Well, why don't you sail in?

Fritz.—Well, then, to begin with, just imagine, just imagine, I fell from my horse!

Hermine.—Didn't I have an idea you would?

Fritz.—Isn't that monumental, isn't it glacier like? To have fallen from your horse the first time in your life!

Hermine.—Yes, because it is the first time in your life that you have been on a horse. Because you have never had the courage before.

Fritz (*offended*).—I beg your pardon. You just go through with what I have just gone through and then talk. When I tell my classmates about that—— Well, I do say! Most of them can't tell a horse from a cow.

Hermine.—Well, why don't you tell how you went about it all?

Madam Rosenhagen.—He probably reined up the horse by the tail. The confounded beasts won't have that.

Fritz (*with animation*).—Oh, I beg your pardon! At first it went fine. I leaned forward——

Hermine (*derisively*).—Leaned forward!——Aha!

Fritz.—Excuse me! That's the way all the aborigines ride, isn't it? Just read Xenophon's Anabasis. Of course, you know nothing about that.

But if you suddenly break into such an insane gallop, a fellow can't help but fall off.

Hermine.—I suppose you tried to catch up with us?

Fritz.—Not I, but the bay. He wanted to follow by all means. He tore along as if mad! Then I got on my ear and said to myself, "See here, my little nag! Let's see who is master, I or you," and I drew up the reins!

Hermine.—Yes, and tore the mouth of the horse.

Fritz (*meekly*).—What do I know! All at once I was lying at the side of the road. My bay, of course, on and away, who knows where? That is the worst of it. Now I'll catch it from Egon.

Karl Egon (*still in the background, lost in thought, looks up, and turns half way around*).—He will find his way to the stable all right, when he has had his fill.

Hermine.—And my little brother had to walk, eh?

Fritz.—That is just what I wanted to tell. That is the main thing.

Hermine.—Why, aren't you through yet?

Fritz.—Not a bit of it! The main experience came to me just as I was walking over. Why, was I attacked!

Hermine.—What were you?

Fritz.—Don't you understand English? I was attacked because I tried to cross a meadow. I had to give up my hat. Isn't that phenomenal? What kind of a figure do I cut now?

Karl Egon (*has turned around quickly, comes forward*).—You were attacked? By whom, pray tell?

Fritz.—By an old crosspatch of a farmer! I believe he lives next to you. (*He points out toward the right.*)

Karl Egon (*starting up*).—Surely not by Voss?—— What did he look like?

Fritz.—Well, without a beard, with bushy white eyebrows. A regular Isengrim! That's the way I imagine Cato the Elder, or some one of that type looked.

Karl Egon (*excited*).—That is Voss! No question about it! That is Voss!—— Another one of his fine tricks! (*He goes to and fro violently.*)

Hermine (*scornfully*).—Pleasant neighborhood, that you have here.

Madam Rosenhagen.—Oh, that has been going on for sixty years! That's all that I am accustomed to any more.

Karl Egon (*goes to and fro*).—But I am not in a temper to take that any longer. That state of affairs must come to an end. (*He controls*

himself, and approaches again.) Tell me, what meadow was that? Surely not that one out there.

Fritz.—That may be very well. But farther over that way! (*Points toward the right*). Not far from the next farmhouse.

Karl Egon (*with suppressed anger*).—Yes, yes, quite right. That is Voss's meadow land! Voss's meadow land! (*With sudden interruption.*) That is, so he *asserts.* That's what he asserts. In reality the case is quite different. In reality the strip does not belong to him at all, of course. We *know* that much.

Hermine (*surprised*).—How can your lordly neighbor attack my brother, if the meadow does not belong to him?

Karl Egon.—That's just the funny thing about it. He is not as daft about anything as he is about this very piece of land, and concerning this piece of land I can prove to him, if I care to, that he has no claim to it at all.

Hermine.—Why in the world don't you *do* it, then?

Karl Egon (*shrugging his shoulders*).—Because, up to the present I have not *cared* to. There is still time for that.

Hermine.—You poor fellow! Then you can not venture three steps from your own house in the future. Is that your fine freedom and splendor?

Karl Egon.—Preposterous! And with all that a public highway leads through the meadow. By the way, didn't you tell him who you were, and whom you are visiting?

Fritz.—Well, may be I didn't! But then he became more rabid than ever, just as if he wanted to slap me. Well, I tell *you,* I looked at him from top to toe when he did that. He forgot all about slapping. All he did then was to take my hat away.

Karl Egon (*going to and fro*).—So that's the way matters stand? That opens up *bright* prospects for our agreement of sale! This is the day, of course, when his time for deliberation is up. I wonder whether that is intended for his answer? Do you know at all, grandmother, whether he has been here?

Madam Rosenhagen.—Voss was here half an hour ago, a short time before you came. Why, Martha spoke to him for a long while.

Karl Egon (*shaking his head*).—Strange! Somebody must have put something in his head. Why, I had him quite pliable already.

Madam Rosenhagen (*gets up groaning*).—Oh, this old frame of bones! After all an old person *is* good for nothing.

Fritz (*runs up to her*).—Shall I help you?

Madam Rosenhagen.—I seem to myself like an old barn door. That, too, is only partly on its hinges still.

Hermine.—But why do you want to get up already, Mrs. Rosenhagen?

Madam Rosenhagen.—Because I don't care to sit any longer!

Fritz (*has taken her arm*).—I'll lead you a bit.

Madam Rosenhagen.—For all I care. We are suited to each other quite well, you and I. The beginning and the end are always suited to each other. (*She takes a few steps on* FRITZ'S *arm and stops.*) I say! Karl!

Karl Egon (*has been going up and down, approaches*).—What is it, grandmother?

Madam Rosenhagen.—If you want to take a bit of advice from an old woman, look out for Voss. Don't have anything to do with him.

Karl Egon.—Don't worry, grandmother. I'll settle him well enough. This way or that!

Madam Rosenhagen (*already at the door*).—I hope you are not reckoning without the host!—— (*To* FRITZ.) Now. Never mind now. Now I'll manage to creep on alone. (*She lets go of his arm and goes out.*)

Fritz.—And *I* must go, *too.*

Hermine.—Yes, don't forget to change your clothes.

Fritz (*whipping and cracking his fingers*).—Well, wasn't that a ripper today!

Hermine (*as if incidentally*).—You may pack your things, while you are at it. We are going away today.

Fritz (*in the door with mouth wide open*).—Pack my things?

Karl Egon (*frightened*).—Hermine!

Hermine (*smiling to* FRITZ).—Yes, yes, pack your things! We are going away.

Fritz (*pouting*).—Go away now, just when it's beginning to get fine!

Hermine.—This is not the last time that that will happen to you in life.

Fritz (*in a rage*).—And I say, that's simply a vile trick! I have something to say when it comes to that.

Hermine.—You are to be quiet and pack your things. We are going away this very day.

Fritz.—And I am not going to allow myself to be treated like a mere kid. I am a senior, remember that!

Karl Egon.—Just be quiet now and go to your room. Hermine will *not* go away.

Fritz (*surprised*).—Well, that makes me curious!

Hermine (*defiantly*).—And *me!*

Fritz.—I tell you, when she takes anything into her head——!

Karl Egon.—We'll see about that.

Fritz.—But you are *quite* right. We men must stick together. The women are becoming bolder every day.

Karl Egon (*has controlled his anger with difficulty during the preceding sentences, now steps up to* HERMINE *with decision*).—Hermine, are you serious about that?

Hermine (*sitting at the sofa table*).—Wait and see.

Karl Egon.—You would inflict *that* upon me?

Hermine.—It will have to come some time at any rate.

Karl Egon (*tenderly*).—Hermine, look at me.

Hermine (*without moving*).—Why, pray tell? Don't I know your face by heart?

Karl Egon (*angrily*).—You are to look at me, Hermine!

Hermine (*surprised, looking at him only partially*).—What kind of a manner is that? How are you talking to me?

Karl Egon (*seizes her hand and draws her up from her chair violently*).—You are to look into my eyes and answer!

Hermine (*leaving her hand in his, she stands opposite him*).—Why, you hurt me!

Karl Egon.—Aren't you *hurting me?* Now listen to me.

Hermine (*looking into his eyes while he holds her hands*).—So the master commands, and the slave is to obey.

Karl Egon.—Why did you come here, Hermine?

Hermine (*lowers her eyes before his scrutiny*).—Why, I have c—— (*Stops involuntarily.*)

Karl Egon.—Yes, I ask you why you have come here——? Answer that question for me!

Hermine (*evasively*).—Wasn't that agreed upon? And then in addition, the bereavement.

Karl Egon.—So it was simply to condole with me on the death of my father and then to go away post-haste. Do you really believe that *yourself?*

Hermine.—No, why should I lie? You know, of course. To take you away.

Karl Egon (*keeping his eyes fixed upon hers*).—And why do you want to take me away?

Hermine (*restless*).—Let go of me now. I must have black and blue spots before now.

Karl Egon (*as before*).—Why did you want to take me away?

Hermine (*derisively, as if trying to control her rising emotion*).—Because I am *sorry* for you, you poor fellow, you!

Karl Egon (*ardently*).—Because you love me, that is the reason you came. Because you love me!

Hermine (*as before*).—Do you feel so certain, my friend?

Karl Egon.—Yes, because you love me! Deny it ten times over, I am certain of it.

Hermine (*smiles at him*).—Oh, you big foolish boy!

Karl Egon.—And what is more, because you love me, you will remain. That is why you will remain!—— Do you hear?

Hermine.—Heavens, how vain you men are? For your sake one is expected to sacrifice his beautiful, golden freedom. Simply so you can make one the honorable mistress of an estate! How vain you are!

Karl Egon (*devouring her with his eyes, and still holding her hands*). Do not stir me up now, Hermine. You are in my power. I can punish you.

Hermine (*challenging*).—Why don't you try to? Why don't you try to?

Karl Egon (*as before*).—Oh, Hermine!

Hermine (*almost disappointed*).—Do you see? You do not dare——!

Karl Egon (*lets her hands go, stands struggling with himself*).—Do not play with me, Hermine!

Hermine.—Haven't I told you long ago, you should not trust me? I am quite base and cowardly and false. False as a cat. Why do you trust me?

Karl Egon (*looking at her*).—And with all that, these deep, deep eyes——!

Hermine (*enticing*).—They lie most of all. The best thing that I can do is to put my hand over them. Then you will not see them. (*She puts her hands over her eyes, and darts glances at him between her fingers.*)

Karl Egon (*losing control*).—Now not even a god will help you! (*He presses her to himself and kisses her passionately.*)

Hermine (*in his arms*).—Don't kiss! Don't kiss!

Karl Egon.—More than ever! More than ever! You are blind, aren't you?

Hermine (*as before*).—Do you love me?

Karl Egon (*with a long kiss*).—So much! So much!

Hermine (*coaxing*).—Then you will promise me, will you not, to go with me——?

Karl Egon (*shrinks back and lets go of her*).—Are you beginning *again?*

Hermine (*leans up against him*).—You will promise me to go with me. Do you hear, dearest? Please, please, please!

Karl Egon (*he draws her down on his chair, sits down beside her and says firmly*).—Not another word about that, Hermine! You belong to *me* now and you are going to stay with me!

Hermine (*leans against him and looks up to him*).—I suppose I am expected to obey now?

Karl Egon.—I do say you are expected to.

Hermine.—And what if I don't want to?

Karl Egon.—You *must!*

Hermine (*strangely*).—Do you see how cowardly I am?

Karl Egon (*jumps up*).—Oh, I am so very happy! I would not exchange places with any king or emperor.

Hermine (*constantly as if on the watch*).—My big boy would like to play king a bit himself, I suppose?!

Karl Egon.—Yes, and I have chosen you to be my queen.

Hermine.—Kinglet and queenlet!

Karl Egon.—Did it seem so narrow and small to you when we were riding over my fields and meadows today?

Hermine.—And when the doughty thane Fritz was captured by an evil king of the border and had to pay a heavy ransom?

Karl Egon (*excited*).—Is it necessary for you to remind me of it? Do you suppose I have forgotten it?

Hermine (*scornfully*).—Why, one can talk about that. Aren't these affairs of state here in your empire?

Karl Egon.—Just scoff! My empire is large enough and soon it will be still larger! Voss shall not lie in ambush for us much longer! He will have to make room!

Hermine.—Room for Egon I.

Karl Egon.—Yes, and then there will be no other master far and wide but me and you! The two of us! I tell you that will be a life!

Martha (*opens the rear door at the right and enters a few steps*).—Mr. Voss is here, Karl. Shall I send him in?

Karl Egon (*turns around absent mindedly*).—What's up? Who is here?

Martha (*coldly*).—Excuse me, if I have disturbed you. I did not know that you were alone.

Hermine (*quickly*).—No, no, it's a good thing, that you have come.

Martha.—Well, what am I to say to Mr. Voss?

Hermine.—Just send in the hostile king. I will retreat.

Martha.—Please, Mr. Voss, my cousin is already waiting anxiously.

Voss (*enters with a curt greeting*).—Bid you good morning!

Hermine (*bows her head*).—Good morning, your majesty of the neighboring kingdom! And at the same time—Adieu! (*She quickly departs to the left.*)

(MARTHA *also withdraws after a long look at the group.*)

(*Pause.*)

Voss (*looks after* HERMINE).—That is the young lady that formerly visited here frequently, is it not?

Karl Egon.—Yes, a friend of my childhood days.

Voss.—I suppose something is in prospect in that connection?

Karl Egon.—I don't understand you.

Voss.—An engagement or something of that kind.

Karl Egon (*shaking his head*).—They aren't gossiping in the village about it, are they?

Voss (*craftily*).—Because, you know, you are intending to dash up one of these grand castles over on my side, on the other side of the mill race! A fellow doesn't do that kind of a thing without a purpose.

Karl Egon (*surprised*).—How in the world do you manage to know that already?

Voss (*eagerly*).—So it *is* true?

Karl Egon.—Strange, how all that is noised about!

Voss (*calmly with fixed purpose*).—A person has his people for that, you know!

Karl Egon.—Won't you take a seat, Mr. Voss?

Voss.—What I have to say can be settled standing. (*The two stand opposite each other,* VOSS *at the table in the center,* KARL EGON *at the sofa table.*)

Karl Egon.—Well, have you made up your mind? Are you going to accept my proposition?

Voss (*quite calm externally*).—No! I have thought the matter over. I am *not* going to sell.

Karl Egon (*perplexed*).—*Not* going to sell?

Voss.—No, I am going to stay where I am! I am *not* going to sell my place!

Karl Egon.—And have you thought the matter over thoroughly, Mr. Voss?

Voss.—Am I a whipper-snapper? I guess I'm old enough!

Karl Egon (*excited*).—But for heaven's sake, man! Do you really know what is at stake? Eighty thousand marks is a fortune! That is more by one half than the place is worth!

Voss.—May *be,* may be *not!* It depends upon what is to be done with the place. If, for instance, a fellow is going to put a great castle there, or heaven knows what——

Karl Egon.—So the price is too low to suit you?

Voss.—Not too low and not too high. I am going to remain in my house, and that settles it! What do I care for the money! What I need for a living, I have. And in case of death, it is even too *much!*

Karl Egon.—Day before yesterday you said the reverse.

Voss.—Can't a person change his mind? A fellow can surely allow himself to be wheedled half way and come to himself again.

Karl Egon.—Do you mean to say I have wheedled you? Haven't I offered you the highest price conceivable?—— Who knows who has wheedled you——?

Voss.—I'm not in favor of quarreling. I simply say I have slept on your proposition once more and here is my *answer!*

Karl Egon.—And that is to settle it?

Voss.—Yes, that will stand. I will not go back on that.

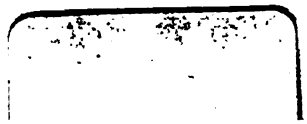
(*Pause.*)

Karl Egon (*walks across the hall, struggling with his excitement*).—Well, we can get ready for a fine state of siege, then.

Voss.—It is all the same to me. I have been accustomed to that all of my blessed life.

Karl Egon (*sharply*).—Yes, of course, you cannot live without quarreling. Everybody knows that. But why I should suffer from that, why I should have my beautiful life spoiled by your pig-headed obstinacy, I don't quite understand! And I am not going to have it!

Voss.—You may thank your dead father for that. And your relatives all told, for that matter. It's to be charged to them that peace and concord have not gained a foothold here at Hohenau. Now don't be surprised if at last a time of retribution comes on.



Karl Egon (*has found himself*).—Mr. Voss, I advise you for the last time, heed a rational suggestion! You *must* see for yourself that an amicable relation is impossible in the long run!

Voss (*scornfully*).—That depends entirely upon *you*.

Karl Egon.—No, it depends upon *you*. You are not the man to keep peace. I can tell that by a thousand and one little things. Only today I realized again.

Voss.—Aha! Because of that young scamp that I ran across on my meadow land——?

Karl Egon (*interrupting*).—I don't want to talk about it now. I want to remain calm. I beg you, do likewise.

Voss.—I am as calm as I have ever been in all of my life.

Karl Egon.—Good! If you are, you must admit, there can be no idea of real peace between us. One of the two parties must yield.

Voss.—Why don't *you* yield, if my presence is inconvenient to you?

Karl Egon.—Since when must the stronger man yield?

Voss.—It must first become clear who the stronger man is in this case! That has not been proved up to the present.

Karl Egon.—I advise you, do not bring it to a test!

Voss.—Aha! Is force really going to be tried?

Karl Egon (*with increasing emotion*).—Just because I do not wish to do that, I am making the greatest advances to you that a man can at all make. For that reason I am making you an offer that no one will ever make you again!

Voss (*mildly*).—And if you offer me a million, I will not yield to you! You will find out who old man Voss is! You and your city rabble!

Karl Egon (*turns on his heel*).—So my father was right after all!

Voss (*in violent anger*).—You shall find out who I am. I shall sugar coat your life for you until you have your fill!

Karl Egon (*beside himself*).—That is base meanness! Why, that is——! (*Goes to and fro, panting.*)

Voss (*a step toward him*).—I suppose I am not expected to notice why you want me away from here by all means? Surely you did not offer me that price without a reason. Because I and my place are in your way, as I was in your father's way! Because you can't stir as long as I am planted here at your door! Because you have hifalutin notions about building a castle and such *pranks* in your head! All I have to say, hands off, my boysie! There's no castle to be built here as long as I can stir a finger! I'll plant a stack of straw on my meadow for you. Then you can keep looking at that straw stack for a view!

Karl Egon (*clenching his fist*).—And with *that* man I thought of peace!

Voss (*calmer*).—Return your thanks to those who have it against their record!

Karl Egon (*steps up before him*).—So you want to take revenge upon me because you no longer *can* upon my father?

Voss.—You may interpret that as you please.

Karl Egon.—You want to pay *me* up for what my ancestors have done to you?

Voss.—Every red penny, if it is possible!

Karl Egon.—And do you know, sir, that in doing so you are forcing me to use the same means to which you forced my father?

Voss.—If I disposed of your father, I shall very certainly be able to dispose of you!

Karl Egon.—You might be awfully mistaken about that!

Voss.—I'll take my chances on that without a fear.

Karl Egon.—Then we are through with each other. (*He turns away.*)

Voss.—Yes, we've talked enough now! Now it's a matter of deeds!

Karl Egon.—Good! Let things take their course.

Voss (*already in the door*).—You will hear from me. (*Goes out quickly.*)

Karl Egon (*stands for a moment as if still reflecting, then rushes to the rear door at the right and calls*).—I say!—— Rathke!—— Rathke!—— Where in the world are you? Rathke!——

Rathke (*comes in hastily*).—Voss has gone!—— Well, what is it, Mr. Rosenhagen? War or peace? I hope war!

Karl Egon (*determined*).—Have them hitch up, Rathke! Have them hitch up! I am going to drive to Danzig at once! Look up the address of Wegner! We must have the documents. There is going to be war!

Rathke (*in wild joy*).—Praise Father, Son and all the rest of them!

Martha (*rushes in*).—What has happened? Voss is gone! Have you come to an agreement or not?

Rathke.—As much so as God and old Nick! Be glad, Miss Reimann. There is going to be war with Voss!

Karl Egon.—He has desired it. Good! His will be done!

Rathke (*runs to the door, calls out*).—Hitch up!—— Say, Mike! —— Hitch up the dog cart! The two roans! Hurry up! Hurry up! Hitch up!

Martha (*stands struggling with herself*).—God have mercy! Do not let it be visited upon me!—— Do not let it be visited upon me!

Curtain.

THIRD ACT

Hall as before. Nothing is changed. Only the sofa table is cleared and put in order. A large bouquet of asters is on the table in the center, a second bouquet on the sofa table. It is the same day as before towards evening. The sinking sun sheds a golden light upon the windows of the hall and the flowers beds and grass plots in the garden. The evening light rets upon the distant heights and forests. Gradually twilight comes on and it begins to grow dark. Towards the end, the moon has risen and sheds its mild light over garden and meadow, near and far. The folding doors into the garden remain open until the end.

(*On the top step at the entrance stand overseer* RATHKE *and* FRITZ DIESTERKAMP, *before them in the garden* BUMKEWITSCH *and three other farm hands with forks on their backs.*)

Fritz.—Well, won't Egon make a fine face when he gets back from Danzig and hears about it! Hurrah! I am tickled about it already.

Rathke (*in sharp anger to the farm hands standing below*).—The deuce get you on the spot! To run away, like old women, because a fellow like that, a fellow like Voss (*he points towards the right*) plants himself down and undertakes to head you off. Such dish rags! As if they had not gone over that road a thousand times! As if everybody in the village did not know that *that* is a public road! And now you allow yourself to be put off by a blackguard like that!

Bumkewitsch (*scratches his head*).—Me be so much fool, me mix up with old Voss! Place is his'n, and kin do what he wants to with it. Kin head off or any old thing. Aint it a fact, pard? (*He turns toward the rest.*)

A Farmhand.—Bumkewitsch am all right. We caint help it, ef Voss wont let us cross his medder. That's the business of the boss.

Second Farmhand.—All the same to we uns. We don't fight with Voss.

Rathke.—And so, the deuce take it, you went all the way around from the Liebschau Cut along the highway instead of coming directly along the meadow road to the estate? Why, that is almost half a mile farther!

Bumkewitsch (*smirking*).—It do take a good hour t' walk it the other way.

Fritz (*on one leg, then on the other*).—What do you say now, Mr. Rathke? Just this noon you gave me the laugh, because he attacked my hat. What kind of a figure do I cut now?

Bumkewitsch.—It's good two hours a day, to go around. One hour there, and one back.

Rathke (*snorting*).—Aren't you drunk, fellows? Go walking two hours a day! Beginning tomorrow morning you're to use the meadow road again. And if it rains blue fire! (*He shakes his fist toward the right.*) We'll get that dog to trotting! Just wait until Mr. Rosenhagen is back from the city. He'll prove it to him all right.

Bumkewitsch (*smirking*).—Wall, an' wot ef ole man Voss comes an' sez— "No, siree—boys—no bizness on my place, hike and git off"?

Rathke.—Then answer him: we've taken this road up to the present and we'll continue to take it. This is a village road.

Bumkewitsch.—Wall, an' ef old Voss gits huffy an' gits 'is pistol out?

Rathke (*mildly*).—What are your forks good for, you lubbers? You handle them pretty well at other times!

Bumkewitsch.—Wall, wot d'ye say, ef Voss gits on 'is ear an' shoots a hole in pore Bumkewitsch's belly?

Rathke.—You say you are a soldier!

Bumkewitsch.—Ticklish 'round ma belly! Don't like a shootin' in ma belly!

Fritz (*enthusiastic*).—That's going to be a capital lark!

Rathke (*to the rest of them*).—Are all of you cowardly curs like the Pole?—— Mike—, aren't you as husky as they make them? You're not afraid to tackle Voss?

First Farmhand (*doubtfully*).—I'd tackle 'im all right in the saloon or on the street or mebbie in front of the church, jest let 'm git after me there. But on 'is place he's on the right side, I'm weak and 'e's strong, an' I know this much, he'll not monkey.

The Other Two.—Nope, he'll not monkey.

First Farmhand.—An' then it 'll go rip. A feller has 'is ole woman an' kids.

Rathke (*raging*).—A nice mess! I smelled a mouse, didn't I? A good thing that we can spoil his fun for him! Mr. Rosenhagen didn't go to the city for nothing.

Fritz (*impatiently*).—But when in the world is Egon coming? What is keeping him so long?

Rathke (*to the farmhands*).—Now here they stand like blockheads! Even four of them afraid of a single one!

First Farmhand.—It jest seems t' me that the boss an' Mr. Voss 'll haf' to fix that up. What's that to us hands? I'm not goin' over Voss's medder, afore that's fix't up. I'm not goin' to scrap with Voss. Not me.

The Other Two.—That's what!

Bumkewitsch.—Me be a dum fool? Git myself shot up?

Rathke (*takes several steps*).—It's just as I've said. There's no way of stopping things now. It's a matter of bending or breaking!

(MARTHA *comes in quickly through the rear door at the right. She looks haggard. Steps up to the group eagerly.*)

Fritz (*who notices her first, rushes toward her*).—Do you know? Have you heard about it already? The old farmer, next door, you know, the fellow who took my hat, he's getting crazier and crazier! Now he has even ordered your hands from the road. Just think of it! Just think of it!

Martha (*frightened*).—Ordered them from the road? What road? Why don't you tell me, Rathke?

Rathke.—The meadow road, of course! From what other road could he, eh?

Fritz (*interrupting*).—And he closed the turnpike at the Liebschau Cut, no one is allowed to go over the meadow from our place hereafter! Everybody must make the long loop now!

Bumkewitsch (*smirking*).—It's two good hours every day, there 'n back.

Rathke (*raging*).—Keep your mug closed, Pole, till you are asked!

Bumkewitsch.—I'll just hustle up an' git out. If I don't, I'll git a thrashin' from the overseer.

First Farmhand.—Kin we uns go *too?*

Rathke.—Go to the deuce, where you belong!

First Farmhand.—Wall, that's wot we'll do then! (*The four depart through the garden toward the right.*)

Rathke (*to* MARTHA).—Now what do you say to that blackguard, that Voss? Didn't I know it beforehand? It's high time to take things seriously.

Martha (*distressed*).—But how can he close the meadow road? Hasn't that always been open?

Rathke.—During the life time of the old man he would not have dared to do that! He thinks he can make a pass at the young man!

Well, just wait, you rogue, this time you have made a bum calculation! This time we got up a bit earlier!

Martha (*oppressed*).—Do you think that something will come of it?

Rathke.—Of what?

Martha.—Hasn't Karl driven to the city to get the evidence in regard to the meadow land? Do you think that is being done with a purpose?

Rathke.—Well, *do* I think that's being done with a purpose! That's Voss's death warrant. If the young man had only been sharp long ago! We should have saved ourselves all of this vexation!

Martha.—I can't imagine that Voss will give in so easily.

Rathke.—He must! The skinflint must! Through that evidence we'll have him in our hands! In *one* way I am glad enough that he played us the trick in regard to the meadow road. Now Mr. Rosenhagen will surely see for himself that there is no such a thing as getting on with him! That only force will do any good with him!

Martha (*excited, anxiously*).—I do hope that will not result in a misfortune!

Fritz (*enthusiastically*).—Oh, that would be great! May be Bumkewitsch will be fired upon after all. For my life, I'd just like to have a hand in that kind of a thing for once!

Bumkewitsch (*comes back into the garden from the right, speaks very quickly and with an important air*). Mr. Rosenhagen's comin'! Mr. Rosenhagen's comin'!

Fritz.—Hurrah! The Prussians are here!

Rathke.—What is up?

Bumkewitsch.—Was a goin' t' say, the cart of Mr. Rosenhagen is a comin' along. It's right close.

Rathke.—Open the gate! I'm coming out directly!

Bumkewitsch.—Runnin' as hard as I can! (*Off quickly toward the right.*)

Fritz (*after him*).—Don't tell! Don't tell! I'll tell him! I'll tell him! (*Likewise off toward the right.*)

Rathke (*on the way to the rear door at the right, he remains standing*).—Well, I am curious enough now to see what he is bringing with him.

Martha.—And what if he brings nothing at all? What if he has changed his mind on the way after all?

Rathke.—Then my term as overseer is about over. With a master who would take that kind of a thing, I'll have nothing more to do!

Martha (*heavily*).—Do not fear. Whenever Karl makes up his mind to anything, he adheres to it.

Rathke.—That's the proper thing for a Rosenhagen to do. Didn't his father and his grandfather do that? (*He goes out at the right with resounding steps.*)

Martha (*remains standing at the table in the center struggling seriously with herself and listens to what is going on outside. Then she presses her hands to her face, sinks upon a chair and sobbing, presses her face against the top of the table*).—My God!—— My God!—— My God!—— (*After a little while she is startled since she hears voices in the garden, jumps up as if she had to flee, runs to the door at the left, but controls herself with some effort and remains standing.*)

(KARL EGON *appears at the right in the garden, accompanied by* FRITZ *who has taken his arm and talks to him eagerly*).

Fritz.—And he has let the turnpike down! And now nobody is allowed to cross the meadow any more! And the fellow who crosses his path, will get a lead pill!

Karl Egon (*about to ascend the garden steps, impatiently*).—But, Fritz, you are fairly pulling me down the steps! Now do let loose of me! Why, one doesn't come to his senses at all! (*He releases himself with a violent gesture.*)

Fritz (*angered*).—Well, can't a fellow tell you the news? If that doesn't interest you, you're to be pitied.

Karl Egon (*sharply*).—Well, then, I'm to *be* pitied! In any case I beg you not to crow in this fashion. Why, they can hear you all the way over to Voss's place.

Fritz (*scornfully*).—Aha! You are probably afraid of him?—— I can imagine as much.

Karl Egon (*sarcastically*).—You are getting *on* some, my son.

Fritz.—Well, well, now don't act off that way. You quake in your boots when it comes to Voss! Moreover, I am not your son, remember that much!

Karl Egon.—If you knew how cute you are! You might have yourself stuffed for a museum. You look like a turkey cock that has gone mad.

Fritz.—Well, I do say! I am going my own way! I guess I'll not take any vile flouts around here! (*He disappears in the garden to the right.*)

Karl Egon (*meanwhile has entered the hall, throws his hat on the table*).—Good evening, Martha.

Martha (*has meanwhile stood motionless, is again calm and composed*).—Good evening, Karl.

Karl Egon (*looks around*).—Why, where is Hermine?

Martha.—I don't know.

Karl Egon (*steps up to her, wants to shake hands with her*).— —— Evening—— Well, aren't you going to shake hands with me?

Martha (*reserved*).—If you want me to. (*Extends her hand hesitatingly.*)

Karl Egon (*shaking his head*).—Sometimes one really is unable to account for you.

Martha (*with a weak smile*).—Is this the *first* time that you have noticed that?

Karl Egon (*looks at her for a moment, then changes the conversation*).—Well, it's fine news with which a person is received here.

Martha.—You mean the affair with Voss?

Karl Egon (*walking up and down violently*).—It's just as if he were planning to force me to the utmost!

Martha (*slowly*).—Don't you think that some one has incited him? Until yesterday everything was in the best of order. You had as much as come to an agreement. Since today suddenly he is as if transformed.

Karl Egon.—Yes, yes, that of course seemed remarkable to me also.

Martha.—There is surely some one back of that.

Karl Egon.—Well, that is no longer of any consequence any how. If some one really did that, it will come back to him some time. It is certain that the fact is established that all is over between Voss and myself, and that now it is simply a question of drawing the consequences.

Martha.—Why, Voss has done that already!

Karl Egon.—Yes, he has gone to work promptly, but I have not been lazy myself. Now we shall wait and see who has the best arms.

Martha.—Did you procure the document from Wegner?

Karl Egon.—Yes, that and several other things. Still more was found in the files. I have already called on Metzler, our attorney. The case is desperately bad for Voss.

Martha (*tired*).—Well, then you may be glad.

Karl Egon.—Yes, just so. Not only in that matter. Also in other respects! Also in other respects!

Martha (*startled*).—Also in other respects? How so?

Karl Egon (*smiling*).—Can't you guess, sister Martha?

Martha (*as before*).—Oh, that's it? You have reached an understanding, you and Hermine?

Karl Egon (*with beaming eyes*).—You see, sister? You've hit it. You've hit it.

Martha.—Then after all?

Karl Egon (*surprised*).—Why, did you suppose anything else to happen?

Martha.—One can never size up these people who are in love.

Karl Egon.—Why, you talk like a hardened old sea-monster.

Martha.—That's just what I am.

Karl Egon.—Now say, in the first place, tell me where *is* Hermine? Why, one doesn't hear or see anything of her.

Martha.—I suppose she is out somewhere on horseback. I have seen her nowhere.

Karl Egon (*absorbed in his thoughts*).—Oh, I tell you, Martha dear, I am so tremendously happy! Tremendously happy!

Rathke (*comes in at the rear door at the right, carrying a rather large satchel and a portfolio*).—And here I have the things from the cart.

Karl Egon.—Very well, just put them here on the table.

Rathke (*approaching and swinging the portfolio*).—That's worth something, Mr. Rosenhagen. That has weight.

Karl Egon.—Did you take a look at the thing? Aren't the documents quite explicit?

Rathke.—Well, are they? It's all clear as crystal. Didn't I say, Miss, that this is the death warrant of Voss? Old Mr. Rosenhagen will rejoice up there! (*He has put the satchel on the table in the center, turns the pages of the documents.*)

Karl Egon.—Isn't that true? It will be difficult to meet *that* evidence.

Rathke (*turns the leaves*).—The best of it is the assessment roll and especially the entry on the 13th of January (Eighteen) Twenty-six. There the Hohenau meadow land is expressly mentioned. That can not refer to anything else. He is certainly a deuced fellow, that man Wegner. Didn't give up till he had collected everything! Knew well enough that he'd find his purchaser, even if it was not a matter of today or tomorrow! Some time we'd have to come to him! The deuced fellow!

Karl Egon.—I should have liked it better if I had not needed him. I might have saved myself that trip. But what is to be done? Circumstances are simply stronger than men. One is compelled to whether he likes it or not.

Rathke.—If only your father had lived just long enough to see that.

Karl Egon (*in meditation*).—Yes, for father it would have been the greatest thing in the world and he had to die in course of it. Now I have it on my hands. I have to stick it out. That's the way it goes in life.

Rathke.—Well, when are we going to begin to bring suit? Or how

are you going to arrange that, sir? It's on account of the meadow road. Of course something will have to be done in regard to that at once.

Karl Egon.—Of course, he must take that back!

Rathke.—How would it be if I just went over and laid down the law to him?

Karl Egon.—Yes, *one* of us must go over and speak to him.

Rathke.—That matter of the meadow road can surely not remain as it is! Why, the people will give us the laugh! A fellow will have to be ashamed of himself!

Karl Egon.—Very well, then! We'll bring the matter to an issue at once!

Rathke.—If the thing's to be done, what's the use of putting it off.

Karl Egon.—Go over and demand that he open the meadow road at once. I say *at once.* If he says *no* at first, then slowly lead out to him what we have in our hand to trump him, all the evidence in regard to the meadow land, and then we'll *see* what he has to say.

Rathke (*diabolically*).—Well, I'm curious to see that face! That sight I will not sell for a good sum of money!

Karl Egon.—Be careful. Do not anger him unnecessarily. One must build golden bridges for the enemy. Let it be apparent, that I *still* offer him what I *have* offered him. I don't want to ruin him. He should listen to reason. No man can give him more.

Rathke.—Now I wouldn't do *that,* sir. Sixty thousand will pay for it, good and plenty.

Karl Egon.—Makes no difference. I've offered it to him and I'll not take it back. I am not an extorter. What I am doing, I am doing under compulsion, because I can't help myself.

Rathke.—Shall I take the documents along when I go over to him?

Karl Egon (*reflecting*).—Yes——or—— Wait a minute! No!—Better leave them here.

Rathke.—I think so, too.

Karl Egon.—If he has any doubts, he can come here and see for himself.

Rathke (*diabolically*).—Well, then, here we go. It's been a long time since I've gone into anything with so much pleasure. (*He turns toward the garden steps.*)

Martha (*has listened silently up to the present, struggling with her disquietude and now intercepts* RATHKE).—Do *not* go, Rathke! Do *not* go.

Rathke (*stopping*).—Well, I will! The deuce you say! What's up!

Martha.—Do not let him go, Karl! I beg you! Have him stay here!

Karl Egon.—But *why*? Some time it will have to be settled after all. So, the sooner, the better! I am crowded for time as it is.

Martha (*excited*).—Why is there such a hurry? Can't everything continue in its old course? Must you by all means drive Voss to the utmost?

Rathke.—Well, now isn't that bright? *Isn't* that bright?

Karl Egon (*shaking his head*).—I really don't understand you, child. It seems to me that Voss is driving *me* to the utmost. I surely have made him advances enough. All he needs to do is to accept.

Rathke.—Oh, don't listen to it at all, sir! Have me go, and let that settle it! Else it will be evening. Why, the sun is just about down now.

Martha.—Don't you *know* Voss, pray tell? I am so afraid something may happen.

Karl Egon (*laughing*).—Are you afraid, Rathke?

Rathke (*raging*).—I'm not afraid of the devil! Expect me to be afraid of Voss!

Martha.—Why, it isn't a question of Rathke. It's a question of you! It will come back upon you!

Karl Egon (*laughing*).—All this anxiety on *my* account—— Good heavens! Some time we'll all have to come to it. Moreover don't worry. An incipient bridegroom like myself is invulnerable. He looks out for his hide well enough.

Rathke (*complacently*).—Now you hear, Miss, what it is to be one of the Rosenhagens. Well, good-bye. And if I am not back in half an hour we have devoured each other hair and hide, Voss and I! Then the devil has got both of us. (*He goes down the steps into the garden laughing, then crosses the foot bridge and disappears toward the right. Outside twilight gradually sets in during the following sentences.*)

Karl Egon (*looks after Rathke*).—Isn't he a loyal soul though! A loyal soul!

Martha.—Oh, that fellow! He must also incite against Voss, in addition to all the rest.

Karl Egon (*steps up to* MARTHA *and lays his hand on her shoulder*). Tell me, Martha, what in the world is the matter with you? You take sides with my worst enemy against me? Just come along and explain now——

Martha (*without looking at him*).—Because I don't see why all that must come about in this way! Why everything can not go its old way!

It has gone well enough up to the present! Why must Voss by all means be put out of house and home?

Karl Egon.—Because he is my enemy as he has been the enemy of my father and my grandfather. Why, haven't you been in our house long enough? You ought to know that!

Martha.—Yes, I know that it has gone up to the present and that it might go on, if it were not for your foolish infatuation.

Karl Egon (*angrily*).—Restrain yourself, Martha!

Martha.—I have restrained myself long enough.

Karl Egon.—I tell you, there is no longer room at Hohenau for both me and Voss. I must be rid of the man, amicably or the reverse! I simply owe that to myself. I owe it to my happiness, to my future!

Martha.—Oh, you are doing all that simply on *her* account! The whole notion of the castle is simply on account of Hermine!

Karl Egon.—Of course, I am doing it for Hermine. Why, isn't Hermine a part of my future, a part of my happiness? Even the best part?

Martha.—Your misfortune, that's what she is. You will live to see that. She's the one who brought all this unrest into our house. She has put everything on its head! How beautifully we could live, if she had not come here!

Karl Egon.—I beg you, Martha, once more, restrain yourself. Hermine has become my betrothed today.

Martha.—After all then? Has she condescended, is she going to stay here?

Karl Egon.—Do stop that kind of talk. We came to an understanding this morning and we intend to celebrate the occasion a bit this evening.

Martha (*weak*).—So you intend to celebrate your engagement this evening?

Karl Egon.—Yes, I think it will be all right with Hermine. If I can ever get a glimpse of her.

Martha (*has gained control of herself again, smiles faintly*).—Then I wish you great happiness——great happiness!

Karl Egon (*cordially*).—I thank you, Martha, I thank you. (*He takes her hand.*) Now that's the way I like to see you.

Martha.—Do you like me again?

Karl Egon.—You will remain my good friend and sister, will you not?

Madam Rosenhagen (*opens the front door at the right, hobbles in on her cane, holds her hand over her eyes*).—Anyone here?

Karl Egon (*turns around*).—We are, grandmother, Martha and I. You are coming just at the right time. I have something to tell you.

Madam Rosenhagen (*approaching*).—Well, well! It's you? All alone here in the dark?

Martha.—There is no danger in that, grandma. You need not fear anything.

Madam Rosenhagen.—And I was already thinking— Too bad! Too bad! You would have made quite a fine couple, you and Karl.

Karl Egon (*in merriment*).—Why, Martha never gave me a bit of encouragement. Why, she doesn't think of that kind of thing. And so I went and picked out another.

Martha.—Do you see how clever that was of you?

Madam Rosenhagen (*stands close to* MARTHA *and looks into her face*).—Why, child, you look so pale!

Martha (*with an effort*).—I, pale? Not a trace! That's simply on account of the twilight.

Karl Egon.—Does anything ail you, Martha?

Martha.—No, nothing ails me. I'll just hurry and get a lamp. Why, you can't see a thing any more! (*She goes out quickly through the rear door at right.*)

(*Temporary silence.*)

Madam Rosenhagen.—Well, now, what did you want to tell me that I don't know already?

Karl Egon (*joyously*).—Something very fine, grandmother! Something about Hermine and me!

Madam Rosenhagen.—Well then, come and give me your arm. Let's go out into the garden a bit yet! You know how I like to do that at night, when the stars come out.

Karl Egon (*offers her his arm and slowly leads her to the garden steps*).—It's about time for the moon to rise too.

Madam Rosenhagen.—Yes, it's going to be a clear night. One can look up again to all of the eternal lights, and follow his own thoughts.

Karl Egon.—Be sure not to keep on sitting in the garden house until midnight again. The nights are already cool.

Madam Rosenhagen.—Don't interfere with my pleasure! Why, that is all that I have left on earth.

Karl Egon.—Well, well! You surely have *us* still! Aren't we anything?

Madam Rosenhagen.—Oh, it's always the old story with man. As with you, so I formerly went down these steps with your father and long before that with your grandfather, my husband——

Karl Egon.—Yes, and now a new generation will soon take root again. Now the great-grandchildren are coming. Aren't you glad to think of that, grandmother?

Madam Rosenhagen.—I don't know! That is always the same thing! I already know it by heart! Let's have something else now! Something entirely new! (*During the last sentences they have arrived at the bottom of the garden. Deep twilight in the hall. Outside clear evening sky. Here and there a star begins to shine.*)

Madam Rosenhagen.—Do you know what star that is, the one that is quite low?

Karl Egon.—Why, yes, that's the evening star.

Madam Rosenhagen.—Yes, that is my star. That is pretty near setting!

Karl Egon.—Who can say as to that, grandmother? Who knows for how many their star is just about to set? (*They slowly disappear toward the right.*)

Martha (*comes in again from the right with the lighted lamp, looks around*).—No one here? They are probably in the garden. (*She puts the lamp on the table in the center, and pensively looks at the bouquet of asters.*) The first asters already. Yes, yes, it's autumn! Autumn! (*She slowly sinks upon a chair, shaken by sudden sobs. The door at the left is opened.*)

Hermine (*enters quickly, but noiselessly, dressed simply but elegantly, looks around, notices* MARTHA *at the table sobbing, steps up and places her hand on* MARTHA'S *shoulder*).—But, dear Miss Reimann. What *is* the matter with you? What is troubling you?

Martha (*starts up with a sudden jerk*).—Who is this?——What do—— Oh, it's you?

Hermine.—To be sure! I suppose you did not hear a word?

Martha (*tries to conceal her confusion*).—Yes, I don't know—— I didn't hear a thing.

Hermine (*fixing her eyes upon her*).—You *were* so engrossed in your pain——

Martha (*still not quite composed*).—I in my pain?

Hermine.—Yes, you must certainly have some secret trouble.

Martha (*calm again and erect*).—At any rate I know nothing of it.

Hermine (*quizzically*).—Why, you sobbed quite audibly, dear Miss Reimann. Moreover one can see the marks of tears on your face. Just confess a bit.

Martha (*passes her handkerchief over her face lightly, entirely composed*).—I have no confession to make to you.

Hermine (*sits down on a chair before her, looks at her, lightly*).—I suppose you think I have no heart for anything like that?

Martha (*stands at the table before her*).—I don't know whether you have a heart. And it's not my affair.

Hermine.—After all, I am a woman, too, even a rather pretty one, as trustworthy men have assured me. Why should I not also be acquainted with the pangs of love?

Martha (*shrugging her shoulders*).—You?

Hermine.—I suppose you think you are the only one who has them?

Martha (*from the depths of her soul*).—What do you know of pangs? What do you know of love?

Hermine (*quickly and with a superior air*).—Do you see? Now you have betrayed yourself. Now I have fathomed you! Moreover I had an idea of it long ago.

Martha (*excited*).—Why, what do you want of me? Why don't you let me alone? Why don't you rejoice in what you have?

Hermine (*with a kind of scornful respect*).—How wild you can be! I like that.

Martha.—What do I care whether you like me or not? In your heart you are laughing at me!

Hermine.—I have clearly underestimated you. But that, of course, is a mutual affair. Why not become friends?

Martha.—*We,* you and I? Never in this world!

Hermine.—I suppose you think I am very shallow?

Martha.—And you certainly *are,* aren't you?

Hermine.—Goodness!—— You are also shallow. We women are all shallow, the men assert. I don't see why we should believe the men when they say that.

Martha.—Just believe it. It's correct in your case.

Hermine (*laughing*).—Oh, you little lamb! Because you can stir up a pound-cake and I can't. For that reason, I suppose, you are deep and I am supposed to be shallow?—— Silly! It's not simply a matter of cooking and baking, is it?

Martha.—Poor Karl! I feel sorry for you!

Hermine.—I don't! I simply see something else in him, something that you do not see. You want to hedge him in artificially. I want to make him free. Who knows who has the better intentions for him?

Martha.—If you love him, you surely *know!*

Hermine.—I have loved him ever since youth. I have learned to admire many a man, but Egon I love.

Martha (*excited*).—Who knows for how long?

Hermine.—Yes, I cannot vouch for myself. Whether it is going to last forever, I do not know. Do *you* know it in regard to *yourself?*

Martha.—I know that if I love some one, it is certainly forever and ever!

Hermine (*jumps up, a little nervous and restless*).—Oh, one tries to make himself believe that. One only tries to make himself believe that. You will have to prove that to me beforehand, if I am to believe you. (*They stand opposite each other, looking into each other's eyes.*)

Martha (*slowly and emphatically*).—And *you* would become his wife? You would become his wife?

Hermine (*quickly*).—Why, who is telling you that?

Martha (*sadly*).—Well, who do you suppose has told me that?

Hermine.—Has Egon told you that? How?

Martha (*bitter*).—Are you only *feigning* now, or what are you up to? I cannot sound you.

Hermine (*searchingly*).—Oh, that is probably the reason for the fervent sobs, when I came into the room a bit ago.

Martha (*hard*).—I *did* not sob. I know nothing about it.

Hermine (*as before*).—Does it really affect you so much? Do you really love him so wildly that you cannot live without him?

Martha (*as if to defend herself against her*).—That is what I ask *you!*

Hermine (*more and more searchingly, almost as if hypnotizing*).—Could you go to the end of the world for him? Could you die for him? Could you commit murder for him?

Martha (*as if struggling against a spell*).—Let me go away. There is something in your eye——

Hermine (*continues to look at her fixedly*).—Why, what *is* in my eye?

Martha (*struggling*).—Something——narcotic!

Hermine (*as before, quite suppressed*).—Could you commit murder for him, I ask?

Martha (*blurts out*).—Possibly!

Hermine (*stoops down to her, whispering all the while*).—Why don't you *murder* me? I am his enemy according to your opinion, am I not? Why am I still alive?

Martha (*broken*).—Stop! Let me go away!

Hermine (*whispering*).—Or why don't you go and murder this

fellow, this Voss? He is certainly his mortal enemy. Why in the world is he still alive?

Martha (*collapsing, puts her hands before her face*).—My God!—— My God!—— My God!——

Hermine (*triumphing*).—Do you see, that *would* be proof. Such a thing I could *not* do. My beautiful young life would be too dear to me for that. But you claim to be so great and strong. Why do you fail to give me the proof? All that even *you* can do is to utter fine words!

Martha (*stands bolt upright*).—Why, what have *I* said? *You* have spoken. And now it is enough. I am not going to debase myself further!

Hermine (*as before*).—Aha! Are you grounding arms? I am not! I am not! For me the decisive struggle is just beginning.

Martha (*has collected herself*).—Oh, why do you go to the trouble of feigning? You ought to be glad that you are the victor.

Hermine.—Who knows! Who knows!

Martha.—You are coming in here now, and I must go away! I have lost my home, and you have found one!

Hermine (*with a strange smile*).—I a home? What notions you do have!

Martha.—Yes, we have exchanged places. You have won the grand prize and I am poor as a beggar!

Hermine (*almost gently*).—Little fool, you!

Martha.—Then do be glad! Do be glad! But one thing I must still know before I go!

Hermine.—Of course, you sentimental soul!

Martha (*rising to her full stature*).—You have asked me whether I could die for him. But can you *live* for him? Can you *live* for him? Can you live for any other person at all but for yourself?

Hermine (*disconcerted, evasively*).—What puzzling questions you ask!

Martha.—You need not answer me, the answer is in your eyes.

Hermine.—I suppose that you are proud now because you have wormed that out? (*She takes a few steps toward the left to the sofa table.*)

Martha.—Yes, I know enough. Make him as happy as you can!—— As you can! (*She turns toward the rear at the right to go.*)

Hermine.—Oh, pshaw! I can do as much as you can any day.

Karl Egon (*comes up the garden steps quickly, at first notices only* HERMINE, *who stands in the light of the lamp, while* MARTHA *has already stepped into the darker background at the right. He goes toward* HER-

MINE *joyously and extends both hands to her.*)—Well, here you are at last, beloved. Thank God! Grandmother and I have been hunting over the whole place for you.

Hermine.—Why, where did you leave her?

Karl Egon.—Do you mean grandmother? She is sitting in the garden house as usual and is racking her brains about Sirius and the other aged gentleman up there. But am I not to get a proper welcome? (*Is about to draw her up to himself.*)

Hermine (*with a quick turn*).—Don't you see? Martha is over there.

Karl Egon (*nonplussed*).—Where, pray tell? (*He turns around.*) You here too, Martha? I am glad of that. Why are you at the door? Come up closer, will you not?

Martha (*at the door at the right, without stirring*).—I only wanted to ask your betrothed another question.

Karl Egon.—Well, that is?

Martha.—She failed to answer, but I read it in her eyes. I congratulate you! (*She opens the door and goes out slowly.*)

Karl Egon (*shakes his head in amazement.*)—Do you understand that?

Hermine.—I believe I do.

Karl Egon (*impatiently*).—Well, I *don't.*

Hermine (*leans her back against the sofa table*).—Did you hear what Martha called me?

Karl Egon.—No, what in the world did she call you?

Hermine.—Your *betrothed,* that's what she called me.

Karl Egon (*restlessly*).—Well, aren't you? Haven't you become that today? Hermine! For heaven's sake! Is the game to begin anew again?

Hermine (*calm and determined*).—Good, I will yield. I will be yours. But I lay down *one* condition.

Karl Egon.—Condition! Condition! Haven't you tormented me enough already. Don't you see that I can hardly bear it any longer?

Hermine.—I lay down *one* condition, Egon!

Karl Egon.—Well, in heaven's name, that is?

Hermine.—That you go out into the world with me. That we do not sit down here in solitude with these peasants.

Karl Egon (*starts up, controls himself*).—It's your pleasure to jest.

Hermine.—No, no, Egon. Promise me that. Promise me that! Think of it, I am to give up my beautiful, blissful Bohemian life in order to

bury myself here? I am to desert my entertaining, funny, crazy people in order to hear your frogs croak here? No, no! I believe I should die of ennui!

Karl Egon (*has gone up and down excitedly, stops*).—So you really haven't enough yet? The whirl is to begin anew?

Hermine.—Come along, Egon! Come along! You will not regret it. It is a wonderful world. You do not know it. One person always more perverse than the other! You will find out something!

Karl Egon (*comes toward her*).—Hermine, recall what you promised me this morning. What we agreed upon.

Hermine.—Oh, you child, nothing at all was agreed upon. You only imagine that.

Karl Egon (*excited*).—Hermine, I surely still have my five senses! (*Stands immediately before her and embraces her.*) Did I not hold you in my arms as I do now? Didn't you kiss me as you do now? (*He presses her up to him and kisses her.*)

Hermine (*resisting*).—Why, don't!—— Why, don't!

Karl Egon (*speaking intently to her*).—Didn't you promise me then, you will stay with me and be mine?

Hermine (*likewise excited*).—Oh, yes! be yours! Be yours! But not here! Out yonder! (*Enticingly.*) Back of the forests, you know!

Karl Egon (*tries to kiss her again*).—Did I only dream all of that? Look at me, Hermine!

Hermine (*extricates herself from him quickly*).—Don't come at me with force again, darling! Or I shall have to say yes again to everything that you demand and you will be angry then, if I cannot keep it later on.

Karl Egon.—In other words then, I took you unawares this morning? You have given me no promise? You nodded to everything simply to be rid of me?

Hermine.—Oh, you stupid thing, who wants to be rid of you? Am I not trying rather to hold to you, oh, so firmly, and carry you with me? See here, lover, this afternoon when you were gone, I took a long, long walk——

Karl Egon.—Weren't you out on horseback?

Hermine (*sits down*).—No, it was my fixed intention to walk. On horseback everything looks so very different, so festal, so in its holiday aspect. But I just wanted to make a thorough test of how things look here at your home in their everyday surroundings. For you in the country have *nothing* but everyday life.

Karl Egon.—Of course we don't have as many holidays as you and your good fellows.

Hermine (*with animation*).—You see, and holidays I need so imperatively! I am so afraid of everyday existence! Why, that is all the fear I have. And so for that reason I walked through the village and beyond out into the fields.

Karl Egon (*in intense suspense*).—Well, and how did you feel out there? Wasn't it fine to be alone in the wide expanse?

Hermine.—Yes, I was glad, when I was finally out of the village. I saw so many little children and such ugly old women. And the wretched huts, and the filth everywhere! Heavens!

Karl Egon.—Why, what in the world did I say to you? Is it not a mission to bring about a change there at last? Make human beings of all of these pack animals and breeding machines? A mission that is really worth while?

Hermine.—But not for me. I don't like to touch filth. You get your gloves dirty.

Karl Egon.—And how was it out in the fields? I trust *that* was better, wasn't it?

Hermine.—At first, yes. I walked and walked. But then I was suddenly seized by a vague fear, such a fear of myself, and it became stronger and stronger.

Karl Egon.—But where did it come from?

Hermine.—It came from the terrible solitude! From the horrible stillness! One can hear his blood pulsate. One can hear himself think. Horrible! I simply ran off, and was even glad when I was in the village again and saw the little children and the old women—— What do you say to that?

Karl Egon (*in strong emotion, gives a short laugh*).—Hm, of course that is bad! Very bad!

Hermine (*breathes with relief*).—Isn't it true, I am not fashioned for solitude? You see that for yourself, surely?

(KARL EGON *goes to and fro silently struggling with himself.*)

Hermine (*jumps up and runs to him*).—And you aren't *either,* my darling! You aren't either! It would be as much of a misfortune for you as for me.

Karl Egon (*pensively*).—Do you think so? Do you suppose so?

Hermine (*leaning against him, looks up at him*).—Quite certainly. As certainly as that I love you!

Karl Egon.—Do you really? Sometimes I have my doubts in a way.

Hermine (*nestles up to him*).—Come along, Egon! Come along! Don't you see how fortune and happiness are beckoning to you? (*She looks at him enticingly and points to the outside.*)

Karl Egon (*seizes her hand passionately*).—Don't forsake me, Hermine! Don't forsake me. I *need* you here. Aren't you to help me? Without you, possibly I cannot ever accomplish what I wish to.

Hermine.—I want to help you, but not here. Out there! Out there beyond the forest. You certainly deserve a better fate than to train dirty peasants to the use of soap.

Karl Egon.—I have only *one* fear here, Hermine——

Hermine (*quickly*).—Of what? Tell me. Now I know that I have you and shall keep you.

Karl Egon.—I am afraid of becoming like my fathers, like my neighbors and all of these people. Of becoming common and commonplace. That rises from the soil like the mist of the meadow, it enfolds one as in a shroud, so one loses his path and miserably perishes in the morass! I am afraid of that.

Hermine.—You see! You see! And you expect me not to be afraid of it?

Karl Egon.—Why, you bring in so much fresh and new blood. You can never be infected by it. For that reason I need you, for that reason I cling to you! Don't abandon me to my fate, Hermine! Do not let me become like the rest!

Hermine.—I'll draw you out with me; out of all the mists. I'll draw you out with me.

Karl Egon (*without listening to her*).—I will offer you all that you would have out there, and more. See,—I have come from Danzig. Everything is in order, everything is under way. You will have a home such as you can never have in your present world, such a one as is not to be found far and wide. I'll care for you to the point of pampering. And we shall not be without people, if we desire them.

Hermine (*passionately*).—You offer me a home and a castle if I remain. And I offer you myself if you will follow me. What is worth more? I say to you, Accept me! Accept me! Make me your beloved! Do with me whatever you please! I *want* nothing but you. I want to make you happy as no human being ever has been happy. But go with me! Go with me! (*She embraces him wildly.*)

Karl Egon (*seizes his head, reeling*).—Hermine—— Hermine!

Hermine (*compelling*).—Say yes! Say yes!

(KARL EGON *stands in a very violent struggle, tries to speak, but cannot.*)

Hermine (*spreads out her arms*).—Are you dizzy, dearest? Come! Kiss me! You have said yes!

Karl Egon (*one step backward, speaks in violent starts*).—I cannot, and I cannot, and I cannot!

Hermine (*bounds off, almost screaming*).—Then stay where you are, you Philistine! Stay where you are!

Karl Egon (*frightened*).—Why, Hermine, do listen to reason! Do hear what I have to say.

Hermine.—Don't go to any further trouble, it is all over between us!

Karl Egon.—Hermine, hear a single word! Why, I am chained here! Why, I am bound to the place with the strongest vows. I promised my father in his last hour. I should stand or fall at my post!

Hermine (*coldly*).—Have a carriage hitched up. I am going to leave on this evening's train.

Karl Egon (*agitated*).—Hermine, consider! There is still time! (*About to seize her hand.*)

Hermine (*retreats in a determined manner*).—Do not touch me! You nauseate me!

Karl Egon (*beside himself*).—And you claim to have loved me? You have played with me!

Hermine (*steps up close to him, with suppressed hatred, almost hoarse*).—I have offered myself to you——and you——you nauseate me!

Karl Egon (*turns away with a violent gesture*).—Then go! Then go!

Rathke (*has already entered from the right during the last words, has wavered a moment, now comes up, whispers half audibly*).—Mr. Rosenhagen!—— Mr. Rosenhagen!

(KARL EGON *stands there without answering.*)

Rathke (*coming up closer, makes a gesture toward the outside*).—Mr. Rosenhagen?—— Mr. Rosenhagen?

Karl Egon (*turning around, restraining his pain with difficulty*).—Are you back, Rathke? What good news are you bringing?

Rathke.—Well, I lighted into him! Lighted into him! Now he would like to speak to you once more!

Karl Egon (*angrily*).—Is he crawling to cross? Then all the better for him!

Rathke.—Pst! He's standing out there in the corridor! I brought him right along!

Karl Egon (*in wild joy*).—He's coming just at the right time for me! Just right!

Rathke.—Now, don't you give in, Mr. Rosenhagen! For heaven's sake don't you give in!

Karl Egon (*as before*).—Just send him in!

Hermine (*has withdrawn up to the door at the left*).—And have a carriage hitched up, Rathke. I am going away this evening.

Rathke (*quite perplexed*).—It isn't possible?

Karl Egon (*curtly*).—Do as Miss Diesterkamp orders.

Hermine.—In a quarter of an hour I shall be ready! Hurry a bit! My time here has come to an end! (*She goes out with a short bow.*)

Rathke (*looks after her, scratches his head*).—Well, am I really to have them hitched up, Mr. Rosenhagen?

Karl Egon (*gloomily*).—Are you deaf, Rathke?—— Can't you hear what you are ordered to do?

Rathke.—Why, Miss Diesterkamp isn't going away for good?

Karl Egon.—Yes, for good! And now see that you send Voss in to me! I am just in a humor to settle with him.

Rathke (*shaking his head*).—Well, I do say! I do say! (*He goes out through the rear door at the right, and leaves the door open.*)

(KARL EGON *goes up and down in wild excitement, struggling for self-control.*)

(VOSS *enters through the open door, shy and sinister, remains standing, seems to be hunting for something to say.*)

Karl Egon (*turns around brusquely*).—Are you here?

Voss (*getting out his words slowly*).—Yes, your overseer told me that you wanted to speak to me!

Karl Egon (*gives a short laugh*).—I to *you?* No! If you have nothing to say to me, you might have spared yourself the trouble! Then we are through before we have begun!

Voss (*closes the door behind him and comes up closer*).—I have heard from your overseer that you have documents in regard to my meadow land.

Karl Egon.—That's correct.

Voss.—All at once, that is supposed not to belong to me——it is supposed to belong to the community——?

Karl Egon.—That too is correct, as the documents demonstrate!

Voss.—Now I suppose you are going into court to sue me and force me to return the land to the community?

Karl Egon.—I have made up my mind to that.

Voss (*craftily*).—And if the community wins, then I suppose you intend to buy the meadow land from it?

Karl Egon.—I don't owe you any information on that point.

Voss.—May I take a look at the documents?

Karl Egon.—The portfolio is there on the table.

Voss (*slowly goes to the table in the center*).—If you will put it into my hands at all?

Karl Egon.—Why not, pray tell?

Voss (*with a short burst of laughter*).—Why, I might take the whole mess and tear it up from end to end.

Karl Egon (*laughing*).—That would help you desperately little. All these are merely copies. The originals are safely deposited in the court house.

Voss.—Well, then I can safely take them.

Karl Egon.—Yes, and for all I care, tear them up. The facts will remain none the less.

(Voss *opens the portfolio, turns the leaves a bit, begins to read.*)

(Karl Egon *goes to and fro with quick steps, entirely engrossed in his thoughts and pays no attention to* Voss.)

(Voss *becomes restless after reading a few moments, quickly turns the leaves, reads again, closes the portfolio violently, throws it on the table in excitement which he can scarcely control, without being able to utter a word.*)

Karl Egon (*looks up, notices* Voss's *emotion, comes closer to him*).—Well, my dear fellow, what do you say now? Are you satisfied?

Voss (*blurting out*).—The whole thing is forgery! Nothing but forgery!

Karl Egon.—Ah! Ah! My revered friend—Go slowly. You are in *my* house at present! Remember that!

Voss (*trembling with rage*).—And I say a hundred times over, that must be forgery! Surely my grandfather was not able to steal a whole tract of land from the community. That is a lie!

Karl Egon.—But he *did* nevertheless! He made use of the good opportunity at the time of the French occupation. You see, people who live in glass houses should not throw stones! Hereafter sweep before your own door instead of maligning my family!

Voss (*in a violent struggle, with constrained voice*).—And so you are going to make use of that now?

Karl Egon.—Yes, if you don't yield in kindness, I will make use of it!

Voss.—And if you win, you probably think I am lost?

Karl Egon.—You may answer that for yourself.

Voss.—Do you know what your overseer said to me a bit ago?

Karl Egon.—How am I to know that?

Voss.—You have my death warrant in your hands, that's what he said.

Karl Egon.—Well then!

Voss (*threatening in a sinister manner*).—Who knows *whose* death warrant that is?

Karl Egon.—Do you possibly think I am *afraid* of you? From now on the issue is: You or I. I made friendly advances to you. You have declined all of them. You have driven me to this point. So don't complain!

Voss.—Why, you are the real son of your father. You do not bear your name in vain.

Karl Egon.—I am proud of that!

Voss (*hoarsely*).—How is it written——I shall punish you down to the seventh generation!

Karl Egon.—For the last time, man, take counsel with yourself! But make it short! Make it short! I shall wait no longer.

Voss.—I'll make it as short as I can!

Karl Egon.—For, if you don't open the meadow road by to-morrow morning, I shall have the turnpike opened by force. Force against force.

Voss.—Force against force?—— Hm, hm!

Karl Egon—Yes! You or I! The account is exhausted!

Voss (*scrutinizes him with a long look*).—The account is exhausted! All right! All right! (*Goes out at the right with bowed head, meets* MARTHA *in the door. The two stand face to face for a moment, look into each other's eyes, and are silent. Then* VOSS *goes out.*)

Martha (*runs to* KARL EGON *in feverish anxiety*).—Be careful, Karl! Be careful! There was something in his face——

Karl Egon.—Now it is coming to pass as my father predicted! It's life or death! Now I feel well again!

Martha.—You provoked him terribly. Look out for him! Do not trust him! Do not trust him!

Karl Egon.—It's all the same, whatever happens! I can face the worst! And if I must fall this minute! All the better! All the better!

Martha.—Now *do* not talk that way! *Do* not talk that way! When I imagine that something is going to happen to you——! (*Struggling with herself.*) And I——? And I——?

Karl Egon (*to himself in wild pain*).—Mad fool that you are! Conceited enough to believe that you can live your life according to your own

plan! Can allow the past to remain buried! Fool! Fool! To this place you are forged! To this place you are rooted! You are to crawl in the dust like your fathers. You are doomed to be commonplace all of your life! That is the heritage that you have bequeathed to me!

Martha (*has struggled with herself intensely, collects herself*).—Karl, I must tell you something. Listen to me.

Karl Egon (*without heeding her*).—Good! You are to have your way. I am not better than you! I am a Rosenhagen and that I must remain! The devil take it! Then I will be it through and through.

Martha (*touches his arm*).—Listen to me, Karl! I must tell you something about myself.

Karl Egon (*looks up*).—What do you want? Let me alone!

Martha.—No, I shall not. You are to know what I have done. Then do with me what you will!

Karl Egon (*to himself, as if far away*).—I want to prove to you that I am of your grain! You are to be delighted with me!

Martha.—Listen to me, Karl. You don't know how bad and tricky I am. Why, it was I who incited Voss this morning! I incited him against you! I told him of your plan in regard to the castle and all the rest and incited him to anger! I am to blame, do you hear, I am to blame if anything happens to you!

Karl Egon (*looks at her with wideopen eyes*).—Martha—— Martha——?

Martha (*with a sad smile*).—Do you now believe what a despicable creature I am? You probably never had an idea of that?

Karl Egon (*as if confused*).—Why did you do that, Martha?

Martha (*forcing her words, spasmodically*).—Because I was envious of Hermine's good fortune!—— Because I was fighting for happiness and home and all!—— Because I could not bear the thought that you—— that you are choosing another, and that I must go away from you! Now you know it! Now do with me what you will! What you will!

Karl Egon (*as if stunned*).—Is that the state of affairs?—— Of course, I did not know that.

Martha.—Now cast me out! Now cast me out! That is all I've deserved.

Karl Egon (*slowly takes several steps, deeply engrossed in thought*).—Of course I did not know that. That is different.

Martha.—Do you see now, whom you have had near you?! That is the Rosenhagens' reward for taking me into their house! That is the way I repay you!

Karl Egon (*stands erect, gloomy and calm*).—Go now! Leave me alone!

Martha (*in extreme anxiety*).—Karl!—— Karl!

Karl Egon (*rising to full stature*).—Go! I tell you. I want to be alone in my house and on my soil.

Martha (*broken*).—Then I wish you all——all the good that fate can bestow.

Karl Egon.—My fate now grows out of this earth, upon which I was planted by my fathers. It will be fulfilled, this way or that!

Martha (*in a low voice*).—Farewell!

Karl Egon (*turns away*).—Go!

Martha (*slowly goes through the hall, suddenly stumbles back, since she vaguely sees a form appear near the garden fence out in the moonlight, cries out half audibly*).—Merciful God!—— Merciful God!

Karl Egon (*who stands with his back toward her, looks around*).—What ails you?—— What else do you want?

Martha (*tries to control herself*).—It seemed to me as if I heard something outside.

Karl Egon.—That is probably the carriage that is driving up.

(MARTHA *runs to the glass door in extreme haste and starts to close it.*)

Karl Egon (*approaches in surprise*).—What are you doing there? Why, leave the door open! It is sultry.

Martha (*tries to hide her anxiety*).—I don't know why I am so afraid. The moon is shining so brightly. Hadn't I better close the door?

Karl Egon.—No, leave it open. My head burns like fire! I must have air! (*He has also gone to the door, opens it wide, without looking out as yet.*)

Martha (*with choking voice*).—Don't you see?! Some one is standing out in the garden near the foot-bridge! Don't you see?

Karl Egon (*turns around suddenly, takes a step forward*).—I say! Who is out there? Who is standing in the garden? Hello there! Answer! (*Short pause. All is quiet. One sees a figure standing in the garden near the foot-bridge.*)

Martha (*screaming*).—That is Voss!—— That is Voss!

Karl Egon (*again advances a step, close up to the steps, with a loud voice*).—I want to know who is standing out there in the garden? Answer!

Martha (*in extreme fear*).—Save yourself, Karl! Save yourself!

Karl Egon (*firmly and in a loud voice*).—I am not going to run away

from Voss! (*He calls over.*) Are you out there, Voss? What business have you in the garden? Go home!

Martha.—Merciful God!—— I see something flash in the moonlight! Now he's taking aim—— Merciful God! (*She tries to embrace him in order to protect him, is thrust back by him and leans against the door post.*)

Karl Egon (*has stepped close to the edge of the steps, calls over*).—Shoot, Voss, if you have the courage!—— Here stands the last Rosenhagen! Shoot! (*He stands upright. At the next moment a shot is heard.*)

Karl Egon (*seizes his breast, staggers back*).—That hit——the mark! (*He sinks down on the top step.*)

Voss's Voice (*from the garden*).—Force against force! The account was exhausted! (*He walks away slowly.*)

Martha (*stoops over* KARL EGON).—Dear Karl!—— My only! Do not die! Do not die! Am I to bear the blame for your death?!

Rathke (*rushes in with stifled shouts*).—Why, no one else but Voss has done that!—— I'll strangle that dog!

Martha (*beside herself*).—To the doctor, Rathke!—— To the doctor! Have them dash along as fast as you can!

Rathke (*grumbling*).—Such a dog!—— Such a dog! (*He goes out with bowed head.*)

Martha (*tries to stop the blood with her kerchief*).—Karl, are you suffering? Why, the doctor will come soon!

Karl Egon (*shakes his head, breathes heavily*).—No doctor!—— It is——over!—— Where is Hermine?

Martha (*desperately*).—Look at me, my only! Why I am *with* you!

Karl Egon.—Where is Hermine?

Hermine (*comes in quickly in her traveling gown*).—What has happened?—— What has happened?—— (*She shrieks.*) Egon!—— Egon!—— (*She totters over to him.*)

Martha (*with an effort*).—Hermine is here now!

Karl Egon.—Where are you, Hermine? I do not see you!

Hermine (*kneels down beside him*).—Why, I am here! Close beside you!—— Don't you recognize me, my darling?

Karl Egon (*weak*).—Lay your hand on my brow!

Hermine (*shaken with emotion*).—Dearest, forgive me! I was not worth it! Forgive me!

Karl Egon (*holds her hand firmly*).—It is well!

Martha (*straightens up, steps aside*).—I am nothing to him!—— He does *not* care about me!

Madam Rosenhagen (*totters in, remains standing, without tears*).—Boy!—— Boy!

Karl Egon (*rises up in a last struggle, looks at the old woman with eyes wide open*).—Grandmother, you here *too?*—— Do you see the beautiful evening star that is setting there?—— Shall I take it your greeting? (*He sinks back and dies.*)

Madam Rosenhagen.—Now he has gone ahead to arrange for quarters.

Curtain.

THE FOUNTAIN OF THE SATYR

Translated from the Portuguese of Eugenio de Castro
by E. W. Olmsted and F. D. Burnet

Prefatory Note

About forty years ago (March 4, 1869) in the old university town of Coimbra, Portugal, Eugenio de Castro was born. His family was of noble lineage, and for generations had been distinguished in the field of letters. His home was one of wealth and refinement. As one of the professors of the University of Coimbra (Manuel da Silva Gayo, to whom I am indebted for many of the facts mentioned in this note), himself a writer of charming verse and prose, says of Eugenio de Castro: "*Brincou entre estantes de livros, ouvindo vozes calmas,*" "He played amongst books, hearing (only) the sound of gentle voices." The influence of both heredity and early training can be seen in the classic flavor and in the graceful elegance of his verse.

Like most poets he began to write early. At the age of fifteen he published the following poems: *Crystallisações da Morte,* and *Canções d'Abril,* and the next year (1885), *Jesus de Nazareth.* Even these early poems are not without spontaneity and charm. Shortly after this the young poet left Coimbra to follow in Lisbon *o Curso superior de Lettras,* and in 1888 was for a time on the staff of the *Dia.* In 1887 he wrote *Per Umbram,* and in 1888, *Horas tristes.* In these compositions a note of greater personal emotion is struck, which is enhanced by more vivid picturesqueness of expression. Towards the close of 1888 the poet returned to Coimbra, and soon after set out for Spain and France, remaining in Paris for several months in 1889. Upon his return he was appointed professor in the Escola "Brotero." *Oaristos* (1890) and *Horas* (1891) date from this epoch of his life. The influence of his travels can be noted in these exquisite poems, and especially of his stay in France, where he came in contact with the younger generation of French poets. From them he introduced symbolism into Portugal and some brilliant effects in verse technique. In 1891 he again went to Lisbon, where he took an active part in the following publications, *Antonio-Maria, Novidades,* and the *Jornal do Commercio.* One of his most beautiful collections of verse, *Sylva* (1894), was written at this time. He returned to Coimbra in 1894, which, after his marriage in 1898, he chose as the place of his

definite residence. There, in his home of refinement and elegance, to which no one could know better than he how to make the stranger welcome, amongst his books and bibelots, he continues to divert himself and to charm his readers with the verses that flow freely from his pen. *Interlunio,* with its pessimistic motto—*"Il faut pleurer les hommes à leur naissance et non pas à leur mort,"* appeared in 1894, and the same year *Belkiss* (prose), then *Tiresias* (1895), *Sagramor* (1895), *Salomé e Outros Poemas* (1896), *A Nereide de Harlem* (1896), *O Rei Galaor* (1897), *Saudades do Ceo* (1899), *Constança* (1900), *Depois de Ceifa* (1901), *O Melhor Retrato de João de Deus* (1906), *A Sombra do Quadrante* (1906), *O Annel de Polycrates* (1907), and *A Fonte do Satyro e Outros Poemas* (1908). Of these later works perhaps *Constança* bears the mark of greatest genius, and has been most favorably received abroad.

His muse has run the whole gamut of poetic tones. "It has risen in rebellion against accepted customs, it has scandalized the worthy fathers, it has been parnassian and has chiseled verses with polished skill. It has been symbolistic and has felt the disturbing charm of voluptuous vagueness and the tremulous restlessness that mystery infuses. It knows the proud limits of the Ivory Tower. It has run through the ample course of free meter. And it has come forth from these and other adventures, graceful and elegant, leaving everywhere vestiges of the wealth of a prodigal genius, and disclosing, under the most varied disguises, the delicacy and distinction of a noble soul. And that nothing may be lacking to the personal experience of the poet, he has known how to submit himself for some years to a purifying silence. And now—now the muse of Eugenio de Castro is classic, unfeignedly classic." So speaks of the poet the foreigner who knew him best and loved him most, a critic of rare literary insight and versed in things Lusitanian as are few men outside the limits of Portugal. I refer to the late professor of the University of Salamanca, J. Nombela y Campos.

Eugenio de Castro has remained, in spite of foreign influences, a poet thoroughly national in character, inheriting especially from João de Deus that great lyric's wonderful gift of "expressing with sweet ingenuousness the passion of love," a gift nowhere more admired or more cultivated than in the land of Camões, where all the poets tell of love with honeyed lips. By far the most beautiful poem in the last published collection of Eugenio de Castro's verse is upon this theme. It is entitled *A Fonte do Satyro.* The tale of love embodied in the poem is partly based on fact, but the elegant treatment of the subject is the poet's own. It is hoped that the translation given here, which follows as closely as possible the meter and

stanza division of the original, will give some idea of its exquisite grace and delicacy. The English ten syllable, five stressed verse has been chosen as the best equivalent of the Portuguese hendecasyllable, and the rhyme scheme *aabbcc,* instead of the *abcabc* of the original stanzas, as the couplet seemed to give the best poetic effect in the English translation.

E. W. O.

"And we may say that his prayer was continuous, not only because he always went about with orisons upon his lips, but because of everything he saw or heard he knew how to make a ladder by which to ascend in thought to God, ever considering God's creatures as a means of knowing God, and so he spoke of everything as of a thing of God,—God's sparrows, God's grasses, God's garments, everything in short upon his lips was of God, because he did not care for anything or understand anything without God."

Fr. Antonio da Encarnação: *Vida de Fr. Luiz de Sousa.*

"The spring wells up under an arch, which, formed of varied and beautiful rustic stone-work, resembles a natural grotto. Within it is seated a huge and well carved satyr, closely reproducing those that poetry has imagined. . . . . This water is received by the pool that we mentioned above, which, on the side of the court, and separated from it only by a low parapet, is on a level with the surface of the ground; and in its depth and breadth thrive many fish, (that have become) so tame in process of time that they rise to the hands of the monks for the crumbs that each one keeps for them, as for their sure and rightful meal."

Fr. Luiz de Sousa: *Historia de S. Domingos.*

HIS matin prayer with pious haste well told,
And young in heart, tho time had marked him old,
Good Frei Luiz de Sousa leaves the halls
Where sanctity's confinèd chill appals,
Content to seek the garden's welcome shade,
As lizards, at the dawn, some sun drench'd glade.

Fair gilly-flowers exhale the breath of Spring:
Afar, slow wheeling up on lazy wing,
A flock of snowy breasted doves a-high
Gleam dazzling white against a sea blue sky:
Vanilla trees, with mingled roses' scent,
Lure droning bees, on sugared plunder bent.

Oh! blest be He, who grants such wealth of bloom,
The fields of golden wheat, the pale sweet broom,
Who gems the sea with coral and with pearl,
Whose waves cerulean silvery crests unfurl
To kiss the stars that cheer the somber nights,
And kindle faery watch fires from far heights.

He, idling, wanders on, then halts awhile
To dream, for there, full in the orchard aisle,
An orange tree with fruits in ripe accord
Flames like a thousand candles of the Lord,
While Time, an ancient beadsman in his art,
Unheeded, tells the wingèd hours apart.

And now at hand a hushèd murmuring hears,
A faint and muffled plashing as of tears
That singly fall into the heedless seas;—
A pool, nearby, whose ruffled breast the breeze
Has whipped to tiny wrath. He here breaks bread
And sees his finny wards rise to be fed.

O happy Friar, thou dost so live,
Content with gifts which Nature has to give,
Content as yonder bird or flowering rose,
Who, reft of earthly shackles, earthly woes,
May crown thy life with word and deed, as gems
That grace the gold of kingly diadems!

Thou art no stranger to misfortune's ills,
But now God's peace thy waning life fulfills.
With book and prayer thy days flow smooth and sure,
No more disturbed lest earthly dreams allure,
For (may this knowledge comfort some mad breast!)
Rough paths of youth teach age to cherish rest.

Thy life, a prayer; thy labor, and thy play,
Thy comings and thy goings through the day.
Thou seest Godly likenesses unfold
In everything that's shaped in mortal mold,
In golden words that mark the inspirèd pen,
In joyous birds and earth and sky and men,

In fields and grasses, herbs and rose-strewn bowers,
Or yonder distant, mist-wrapped mountain towers:
The weeping flute, to thee, a holy dirge.
Oh, sweet thy life, that doth so purely merge
The God in man with Nature's wondrous leaven,
Thy falt'ring feet on earth, thy soul, in Heav'n.

—But now the kindly feast is wellnigh done,
Yet, "Brother, leave us not awhile," cries one
(For him, who lived such simple things among,
Had Faith soon taught the "Lesser Children's" tongue).
They plead, and cleave the pool's clear sapphire breast,
Like sudden lightnings, darting in the West.

And thus the good man gently chides their greed,
"More patience, pray, my sparrows too have need,
For are we not all fruit of one same vine?
As I your brother am, so are they mine."
Then, at his words fly down a noisy band,
To, fearless, pluck the bread from out his hand.

Now westward wheels the weary sun to rest
While nightingales the twilight hours attest.
With lingering glance the Friar leaves his friends,
Regreets the old, then to the new descends.
Before him, by the lavender's tall hedge,
A copious fountain flows, 'midst rush and sedge:

The somber grotto, wrapped in eery gloom,
Green ivy decked, like death-wreaths on a tomb.
And 'neath its ancient arch, in solemn state,
Enthroned for ages, huge, a figure sate,
A Satyr, in whose hand a brimming cup
Dripp'd as of old, when Gods had paused to sup.

With twinkling eyes and pricked-up, pointed ears,
Again the sound of reveling he hears
Afar, and sees, with burning glances bright,
The sporting Naiads, naked, take affright.
Again the Satyr, warmed with memory, sips
Wild, breathless kisses from protesting lips.

The good priest cries: "What strange and new-found thing
Is this that changes thee?" and answering
The Satyr laughs with mad, unholy glee:
"All things are fleeting! Time, a mockery!
The light of Spring hath closed grim Winter's sway,
And I am drunk, for Spring is born today!"

"Hark! At the dawn the winds, those vagrant thieves,
Stole, laughing, from their dewy couch of leaves:
The scent of crushèd violets they bore,
As once, when on the silvered waters' shore
I hid, and watched the Naiads as they gave
Their tim'rous bodies to the sportive wave!"

"Now silence!" cries the priest. "Unclean thy thought!
Forgettest thou that God Himself hath wrought
This roof that turns the ages from thy head?
Kneel fearfully to Him, and ne'er be led,
When, from the depths of Hell, with longings vast,
Well up those siren voices of the Past.

"See I have cast the erring world aside,
And ta'en meek Charity to be my bride,
My lover, ever wooing with a love
Whose ardor burns to light my soul above:
Oblivion bars my road to memory,
As pathless night falls o'er the restless sea."

A sudden keen emotion stirs to life
This thing of stone. "Ah, how couldst thou the strife
And fire of love forget?" the Satyr said.
The priest cried out: "The one I loved is dead,
And if, at times, my dreams her fair form take,
My prayers soon banish all when I awake."

"Thou call'st her dead! Thy prayers have buried deep
The memory of a maid who lives to weep
Alone in some dark convent's clammy cell,
Alone, and silent 'midst her living Hell,
Whilst recollection, sad, bedewed with tears,
This azure hour evokes of fairer years!"

"When on thy couch, all bare, the mocking might
Of sleepless lids hath cursed the noon of night,
When winter winds have, shrieking, wound their shroud
To swathe the shiv'ring trees with death cold bowed,
Do not, then, glorious visions dazzling rise
Of her dear face, her laughing mouth, her eyes?

"Doth not her form oft set the nightly scene,
Who bore the witching name of Magdalene?—
Her eyes, more witching, gem'd with love lights rare
Shone star-like in the twilight of her hair—
She wore a woven rose-wreath for a gird,
Canst thou forget?"—He answers now no word.

—Intoxicating spices fill the breeze,
The lofty beech and sighing laurel trees
From root to summit tremble as with love;
Whilst from the sun-kissed tower a mating dove
Entones his song of Spring. Keen passion flowers
Adorn the dell like gladsome bridal bowers.

Then Frei de Sousa feels within him stir
The long-forgotten lure of things that were,
And, fearful that his soul might not endure,
He plucks a lily, white and chastely pure:
"Oh, Queen of flowers, all Solomon's array
Was but to thee as night is to the day!"

But now, upon the spotless lily's breast
A dark bee lights, in feverish, eager quest
To woo its love. Then, wild before his sight,
The mem'ry comes confused of one mad night
Spent out with her, when he, at dawn, stooped low
To kiss the mole upon her breast of snow.

Frei Luiz flees.—The vespers call to prayer:
The low-voiced drone of evening fills the air:
The Satyr, hot, sees Nymphs in choral dance
Slow fade away.—All things are giv'n to chance,
All things save love, the sweet, the fleet, the brave,
That conquers men from cradle to the grave!